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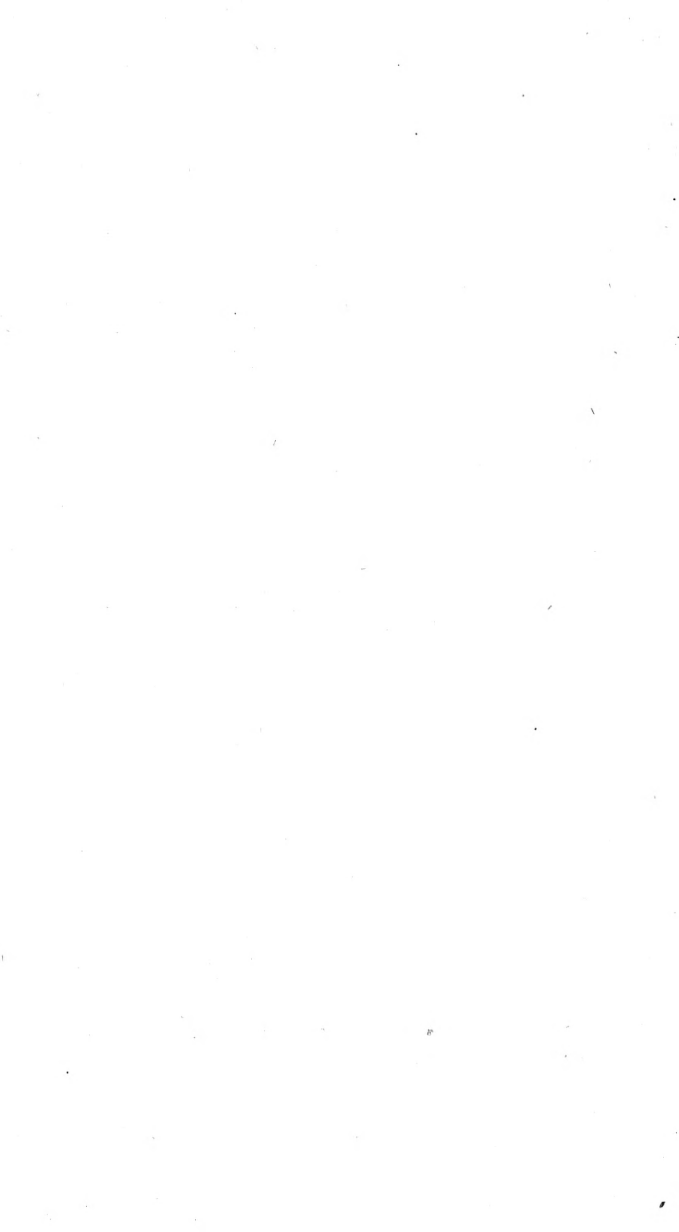
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EUSTACE FITZ-RICHARD.

A Tale of the Barons' Wars.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE BANDIT CHIEF, OR LORDS OF URVINO.

Hyppolyta.—This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

Theseus.—The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse,
if imagination an end them. *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

VOL. IV.

L O N D O N :

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EUSTACE FITZ-RICHARD.

CHAPTER I.

LEICESTER, in possession of the persons of the king and prince, Richard of Cornwall, and Henry D'Almaine, and the brave lords of the marches, with their hardy vassals, already on their way to the borders of Wales and Scotland, broke through all the stipulations of the treaty; and while he forced the king to sign orders for the surrender of all the garrisons which were in the hands of the royalists, treated both him and the princes of his family as prisoners, and not as hostages. The day after the battle, he took up his lodgings in the castle, and not content

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with

with shewing his ill faith to the royalists, hesitated not to display the same turpitude to those who had chiefly contributed to his present greatness.

Eustace had been summoned to the castle-hall, and there saw the baron John Fitz-John seated near the more elevated chair which Montfort had not hesitated to assume. John Fitz-John's head was bound with a scarf of crimson silk, and his countenance was ghastly pale. The earls of Gloucester and of Derby, Thomas de Clare, and others, some seated, and some standing, were around Leicester, who, with his head covered with a velvet cap, looked the monarch of the scene.

"That is the traitor," said John Fitz-John, pointing to Eustace as he approached, "who, in last night's skirmishing, aided one of Henry's knights, and struck me with his battleaxe. I claim justice at your hands, noble Simon—order the headsman to do his office at the castle-gate."

"What say you, young gentleman, to
this

this most serious charge?" said Leicester; "I grieve to hear such accusation against one whom I yesterday beheld win his right to a pair of golden spurs."

"I struck him down," said Eustace firmly, "not in a gallant skirmish, but when he had foully plotted, in a base ambush, to slay a noble knight."

"Is the son of a London citizen," said Henry Montfort, eldest son of the earl of Leicester, "to be permitted to thrust his lance in knightly quarrels?"

"He yesterday carried a king bravely to the earth," said the earl of Gloucester, "when fighting under my banner."

"And yet you style Richard of Cornwall your prisoner," said Henry Montfort, with a disdainful smile; "you must learn, earl of Gloucester, that my uncle is not a captive of Gilbert de Clare's."

"How say you?" said the red earl, his hand grasping the hilt of his sword; "the king of the Romans not my prisoner! am

not I great enough to have the custody of my uncle-in-law?"

"I am of his blood—not connected by mere alliance," replied Henry.—"I claim the custody of the king of the Romans," he added, addressing Leicester.

"This dispute interferes with the administration of justice," said Leicester; "but as I owe you, my son, a signal grace for your yesterday's good service, I will consider of your request."

"Consider whether I shall have the custody of mine own prisoner!" said Gloucester, with indignant amazement.

"Peace, my lord!" said Leicester.

"Lord Leicester!" said Gloucester.

"Don't you hear the earl commands your silence?" said Henry Montfort.

"Death! to what a pass is this my rebellion hath brought me!" said Gloucester, folding his arms, and looking gloomily on.

"Explain, young sir," said Leicester, "how you happened to give aid to an enemy, and assault this noble baron?"

"Pardon

“ Pardon me,” said Fitz-John, rising, “ for saying you would do me a discourtesy, were you to question my word, and believe that of a mean Londoner.”

“ Mean as you are pleased to style me,” said Eustace, “ I am not a housebreaker, I am not a robber, I am not a murderer of an old man, I am not an intended assassin of——”

“ Silence, slave !” said Guy Montfort, the youngest son of the earl, and struck at him, but Thomas de Clare caught his arm.

“ By the soul of my father,” said Gloucester, “ this overbearing insolence of all who bear the name of Montfort surpasseth endurance !—Speak on, brave Eustace Fitz-Richard ; you wear a badge of my sister’s—you have fought under my standard—you have assisted me in making a king prisoner : speak on, I say—speak boldly ; you have a front that quails not at these men, whom I have holpen to raise—speak on, Gilbert de Clare is your friend and protector !”

“This man—this baron John Fitz-John,” said Eustace, “I charge with robbery, murder, and an attempt to assassinate——”

“Peace!”—“Silence!”—“Down with him!” was vociferated by a dozen voices, while Gloucester and Thomas de Clare, supported by several of their knights, stood round Eustace, and protected him from their violence.

Leicester, who had maintained the utmost composure of mien during this angry tumult, had whispered some words in Fitz-John’s ears, and now said aloud, addressing Eustace—“The gallantry you displayed when your fellow-citizens so basely fled, has induced me to request of my lord John Fitz-John not to further inquire into your questionable conduct in wounding him; you may therefore retire from the castle.”

“Not so,” said the earl of Gloucester; “the castle is now mine—remain my guest.—My lord of Leicester, I claim of
you

you the fulfilment of our agreement—I claim immediate possession of this castle, and of all the castles, lordships, and manors, of the earl of Warenne and Surrey.”

“For bringing fifteen thousand Londoners into the field, who fled without striking a blow!—Oh no, there was one of them ran his lance through a painted lion!” said Henry Montfort sneeringly: “for this gallant aid Gilbert de Clare demands half-a-dozen castles, and a hundred knights’ fees!”

“You shall have all, my lord, saving this castle of Lewes and that of Rye,” said Leicester.

“By the mass, not the tower of a forty pound knight,” said Gloucester, “unless I have the whole!”

“Bring the Londoners up, and win them,” said Guy Montfort tauntingly.

“Ay, with the Londoners alone would I drive thee, and all the Montforts, and all who aid them, into yonder green sea, which washes that shore from whence

your bastard blood came to curse this land!" said the red earl furiously; "but I want not, in mine own quarrel, other aid than that of my own followers. I claim this castle, Rye, all and every thing which belonged to John de Warenne; and further, I claim the custody of the king of the Romans, and of all who were taken prisoners under my banner."

"Methinks, my lord," said Leicester, with a settled frown on his brow, "you use strange language when asking favours."

"Favours! asking favours! is the demanding the fulfilment of an agreement asking a favour?" said Gloucester. "Do you speak of unsuitable language, who have heard the insolences of your sons to the first subject in England? I—I, Gilbert de Clare, to be jibed by a Henry or a Guy de Montfort! Pshaw! my lord, 'tis flat! Give me all I ask, or I will have nothing at your hands."

"The king has already affixed his signature to this warrant," said Leicester, touching

touching a parchment which lay on a table that stood before him, "granting to you all the lands and castles of John de Warrenne, excepting the castles of Rye and Lewes; these are intrusted to other hands."

"Now, by saint Dennis, since Gilbert de Clare will remind me of my descent from royal France," said Henry Montfort, "I think you do this over-proud earl too much favour in giving him the lands of your brother-in-law; let him depart, and do you obtain for me my uncle Henry's signature to a grant of the earl of Gloucester's lands, and I will win and wear them."

"Sayest thou?" and Gloucester grasped the hilt of his sword.

"Break up, my lords; let there be an end of this contention," said Leicester, rising, and turning away, he quitted the apartment, followed by his sons and the greater part of the assemblage.

Gloucester remained, and with him his brother, and also Robert Ferrers, earl of

Derby, with several of their feudatory knights. Eustace also remained, Thomas de Clare having his arm locked within his.

The young earl gazed for a moment on the retiring figures of Leicester's followers ; then looking around him until his eyes met the earl of Derby—"The devil hath been our guide, and not saint George," he said ; "but we must not tarry ; those who will not stoop to the Frenchman, away with me, or our guerdon will be manacles and a stone vault."

"Thou sayest it, my friend," said the earl of Derby. "Let us to horse ; the day has strangely turned."

"Ay, and by the soul of my father, it shall not be long ere it changes with Simon Montfort and his insolent sons !" said Gloucester.

The earls of Gloucester and Derby drew off their forces, and set out from Lewes, leaving Leicester in full possession of the king and princes, and actual sovereignty of the kingdom. He obtained the royal
signature

signature to whatever he demanded. The royal fortresses were given up to him, with the exception of the castle of Bristol, whither the brave garrison of Tunbridge, on surrendering that castle, marched, and there maintained themselves and it, as a nucleus to which the royalists might once more gather. In violation of all usage and good faith, Leicester sent prince Edward and Henry D'Almaine as prisoners to Dover Castle, of which he had his son Henry made the governor. Wherever he went, he carried Henry with him, thus glossing over his tyrannous acts with the countenance and name of the king. He threw every nobleman who had been faithful to the crown, on whom he could lay his hands, into prison, and committed so many enormities, that he soon began to feel their effect on the public mind, and to guard against the gathering of any force to resist his power, procured the royal mandate, forbidding, on pain of death, any person, of what degree soever, from appear-

ing abroad with arms without the king's licence. Thus none were armed but his creatures. Such is a brief outline of a part of Montfort's tyrannies during the year subsequent to the battle of Lewes, which are here noted, that when any of them cross the path of our private tale, they may not require a separate explanation.

The earl of Gloucester and Thomas de Clare warmly invited Eustace to accompany them, and share in their fortunes; but he excused himself, saying, he had private duties to attend to, which required his immediate care.

"Am I to bear no message to my sister from her gallant squire?" said Thomas de Clare.

"Commend me to the lady Agnes," he replied; "and say, if it so pleases you, that I endeavoured to do my devoir in the late battle, as became one honoured with wearing her plume, and that I humbly lay at her feet this bracelet of the king of the Romans."

"Certes

“ Certes a most honourable trophy,” said De Clare. “ But hadst thou not better present it thyself?”

“ If you would do me so much grace, my lord, as to bear it to the lady Agnes,” said Eustace, “ I shall feel obliged. I am now bound by a vow I last night made, on a service wherein, should I succeed, I look not for reward, yet shall be happy.”

“ Your vow I hold sacred, be it what it may,” said De Clare; “ and I will cheerfully bend my knee, and lay your well-won bracelet of a king at the feet of Agnes.”

They were at this time on the borders of Kent, and there parted. Eustace, impatient to learn what tidings Langley might have obtained of Adeline, pushed on towards London.

As he journeyed solitarily along, various subjects crossed his mind, some giving it a momentary elation, and others inflicting the stings of mortification and wounded pride. It was frankly acknowledged on all

all hands that he had bravely distinguished himself; but his having done so had not protected him from the contemptuous sneers of the arrogant. He felt that the more he had merited applause, the more powerfully had been awakened the contumelious spirit of those who surrounded him. The Montforts and their party had grossly insulted him, and he was forced to think that the proud Gloucester had chiefly supported him from pique to them. This he was led to suppose, from having noticed a disdainful smile which had curled the earl's lip when he gave the bracelet to his brother, which, whether it proceeded from offended pride that he should have possessed a trophy of their capture of the king of the Romans, which the earl seemed willing to think had been achieved by himself alone, or that he contemned as presumptuous his offering to his sister this homage of chivalrous devotedness, convinced Eustace that the casual circumstances which had for the moment made the earl

earl his friend, were of too slight a nature to make him for a moment overlook the distance which the fortune of birth had placed between them.

The quarrel between Gloucester and the Montforts, so indicative of the grasping and arrogant spirits of the men, threw a light on the motives which influenced some of the greater barons in plunging their country into civil war, which had not the effect of strengthening Eustace's attachment to their cause, while it had at the same time illustrated that overweening pride, which when the shackles of courtesy and interest drop off, will make men taunt each other on points which are considered as either subjects of exultation or of disgrace, according to the peculiar medium through which they are viewed.

The vindictiveness with which John Fitz-John had sought to revenge his saving Alwyn from his treachery, could not aggravate his previous estimation of his character; but he shuddered to think that it
was

was to this man Leicester had committed Adeline when she was carried from London. The war however was now ended; he was once more free. To hasten to the succour of Adeline, should she require it, was now his undivided purpose; and he approached London with the hope of hearing some tidings from his emissary Langley, and with the purpose of repairing his losses in horses and baggage, which had fallen into the hands of the enemy on the rout of the Londoners.

When he entered his father's house, and hastily pushed open the door of the sitting-room, a shriek from his mother and his sister burst on him. His father rushed forward, and clasped him in his arms; and lord Emeric, supporting himself with a crutch, exclaimed—"I told you not to believe the rumour of his being slain!"

"My son! God be praised I feel you here!" said his father, straining him to his breast.

His mother and sister hung around him,
and

and kissed his cheeks and hands, but for some minutes could not speak. At length Margaret found utterance—"Oh, brother, if you knew all we have felt since we heard that our men were routed, and you were amongst the ten thousand of them that have been slain! but I am now so happy, I could almost laugh; yet, poor fellows, so many brave men to have been killed in one day!"

"Poltroons, Meg, the veriest cowards that ever ran from battle-field! they did not fight—they were cut down when fleeing from half their own force!"

"Oh ho, master Eustace!" said Margaret, with resumed vivacity; "so, although you have not won the race to the Bridge-gate, it was more the fault of your horse than your spurs. Was it your beautiful Andalusian proved a laggard, and deprived you of the wreath I promised him who should be the first, from the hands of the city maidens?"

"Alas, my bonny barb! he will no
more

more eat white bread from thy hands, dear Meg; he was slain near to Lewes after sunset; the London army had fled six hours before."

"Ah, the beautiful Mustapha! and is he dead? How well I recollect his large full eyes, and dilated nostrils, when he would see me coming with the bread in my hand!"

"Thank Heaven, my son did not run away like the rest!" said the dame, again folding Eustace in her arms.

"But tell us, my son," said his father, "the true conduct of the battle, for not any two of those men who have returned give the same account of it; but the most current story amongst them is, that they fought manfully from sunrise to midday against double their numbers, and that they did not retreat until they had lost two-thirds of their army."

"They fought! they retreated!" said Eustace, laughing; "why, sir, they fled almost without striking a blow, excepting
the

the brave men who fell around me in the onset ; but let them tell their own story ; I will be silent on their disgrace, so that none of them boast within my hearing."

" Well, but you can tell us what you did," said the dame, looking at him with glistening eyes.

" I did not run away," he answered ; " but I have nevertheless lost all my horses and baggage, having brought nothing from the field but myself, and the habit and arms I wear."

" Thank God you have brought yourself !" said his father ; " your losses can be easily replaced."

" In the mean while, I should be glad to know whether your larder is better than those which have lately supplied my fare ?" said Eustace.

While the repast was being placed on a table, Eustace retired to disencumber himself of his armour, and change his habiliments ; and when he returned to the social circle, he answered the various questions

questions which were put to him, so as to satisfy their eager desire to learn the leading particulars of the late momentous battle.

Lord Emeric, who was rapidly recovering from the effects both of his wound and fractured limb, readily perceived that Eustace had been personally engaged in the conflicts subsequent to the flight of the Londoners, although he only spoke of what he had seen others do, not what he had himself done.

On the following day, Will Langley made his appearance; and by the look of intelligence with which he accompanied his obeisance to his master, gave Eustace hopes that he had succeeded in gaining tidings of Adeline. But however prompt he might be in action, Will Leap-the-Dyke had the common misfortune of being a prolix narrator, and instead of at once announcing the material intelligence he had to communicate, he entered on a minute account of his various unsuccessful

ful

ful searches. This suited not with the impatient spirit of his master, who endeavoured, by a hundred interruptions, to bring him to the point, which however had only the effect of throwing the fellow out; so that he at length allowed him to take his own course, as the likeliest to bring him to the end of his account of his ten days journeying through the neighbouring counties.—“ So, sir, as I was saying,” continued Langley, after having been during two hours coming to the long-desired point—“ so, sir, as I was saying, the old crone told me, that when she was in the lady’s chamber, and reading on her hand her good and evil fortune—I wish your worship would but see old Deborah—there is not a gipsy on this side Trent can read the lines, and——”

“ Nay, nay, Langley, to the matter,” said Eustace; “ I question not the woman’s skill.”

“ Well, sir, as the crone held the lady’s hand, and was reading a destiny which
made

made her palsied head shake still more sadly, a young and beautiful lady entered the chamber. The elder lady hastily drew her hand from Deborah's, and said, drawing herself proudly up—"Lady Adeline, what is your pleasure with me?—Good woman, you may retire." I looked up angrily, said the crone, at being interrupted; but when I saw that beautiful and innocent face, clouded with sorrow, and beheld the countenance of the proud woman whose fortune I was telling, I muttered a blessing on the bonny lamb, and a curse on her who drove me from her with disdain, at the moment I could have told her her death would be as unhappy as her life had been wicked."

"I would fain hope this is the lady Adeline of whom I sent you in quest," said Eustace; "but of that what further proof have you?"

"Says I to the crone—" began Langley.

"Never mind what you said, or she said,"

said," interrupted Eustace, " but to the proof."

" But how can I come at that," replied Langley, " unless I tell you what the old gipsy woman said; and how could she have said any thing to the purpose, unless she had heard my say?"

" Well, well, have your own way; but if you don't desire to have your brains beaten out, come speedily to the point."

" Says I to the crone," said Langley—Eustace frowned; but the man went on in his own method—" says I, ' now tell me, in requital of this piece of gold, all that thou knowest about that beautiful young lady?'—Says the crone to me—' When ladies well on to fifty winters must have their fortunes told, those who have not seen twenty summers bloom will pant to have the page read in which their destiny is written; and as I am now but frail, and cannot walk after the stars as I was wont to do, I am fain to employ my scholars in searching for me the knowledge which
is

is contained in the heavenly books. But while I rested me in the kitchen, and looked at the hands of the wenches, I picked up what will answer thy purpose, though it goes not to the length of that knowledge which I shall have when I see the young lady's hand."

"Tell me what the old witch so picked up," said Eustace; "and it will answer me, as well as her, in telling of the past and the present; and as to the future, I may perhaps hazard as shrewd a guess as her, without consulting either palm or stars."

"She learnt," said Langley, "that her name is Adeline de Melmonby——"

"Enough," said Eustace, starting up. "No; go on."

"That she is an orphan, and a ward of the earl of Leicester," continued Langley, "the heiress of great estates, and promised in marriage to a Scottish knight, whom she cannot endure; but that the earl seems uncertain whether to have that marriage take place, or to raise her still
more

more highly. The latter seems to give the lady Gertrude great chagrin, which breaks out in angry speeches, overheard by the domestics, without being fully understood."

"With such pickings up," said Eustace, "the crone might tell any lady's fortune in the kingdom; but take this purse, good Langley—send a present to Margot, by Bobbin the pedlar, as a token that thou art faithful to her and thy master; then prepare thee to set out with me; it is but an hour's ride, although thou hast been ten days finding out the lady Adeline's bower."

CHAPTER II.
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It was yet early night, when Eustace, attired as a minstrel, ran over the chords of a small harp near the gate of the castle where Adeline was confined. The full moon soared in the cloudless sky, and a gentle breeze rustled the light foliage of the trees. It was a night and scene well fitted for a lover's melancholy plaint; but the sentinel on the watch-tower thought of battle fields, and, challenging the minstrel, asked him to sing of deeds of arms.

"That will I cheerfully," said Eustace, "if you will admit me within the castle gate, and give me shelter for the night; for I have journeyed far since I sang in the earl of Leicester's presence, in the hall of the castle of Lewes, the day after the great battle."

"How



“How sayst thou, friend? has there been a battle fought, and won by the noble earl?”

“I say sooth,” said Eustace; “and can sing of how the kings and princes were beaten, and the barons won the field, in which ten thousand men were slain.”

“Now, by our halidom,” said the sentinel, “were a thousand friars to forbid the gates being opened, it would be unlike a Christian soldier to leave a minstrel so stored with glorious news to lie all night in the open forest! nay, truly, to bide the bidding of a begging friar present is bad enough, but to recollect his orders when absent, is more than my memory is equal to.—Hollo! Within there!”

The sentinel disappeared from the battlement, the bridge was lowered, and Eustace admitted into the guard-room, where seven or eight archers joyfully welcomed him. They pressed him to drink from a huge flagon of ale; which he did, and satisfied their curiosity, by chanting,

to an irregular measure, some of the glorious deeds at the battle of Lewes. But his object was not attained by singing in the gateway tower; he wanted to be admitted into the castle keep. This object was facilitated by the curiosity of one of the female domestics, who had been either attracted to the tower by the exulting shouts of the archers at particular passages in his metrical tale, or by some less-acknowledged object.

“How now, fair Cicely!” said he who appeared to have the command, as a pretty, rosy-cheeked damsel peeped into the guard-room. “Dost thou want to hear of the great fight, and how our noble lord has taken two kings, two princes, and half a hundred great lords, prisoners? Or dost thou want to look at the pale moon, while Hubert keeps the watch?”

“Hubert, forsooth! I would have you to know that I am company for a squire!” said Cicely: “but I don’t see, when a minstrel has crossed the bridge, why he should

should be kept in the warder's tower, instead of playing and singing in my lady's bower."

"There are two very sufficient reasons," said the archer; "the first is, father Jerome——"

"A straw for an absent confessor; it is bad enough when he has us on our knees, whispering our peccadilloes, without having to care for him when he is away," said the damsel.

"But the lady Gertrude," said the archer.

"My lady has been foretold, that a minstrel would sing to her of a great earl, whose name begins with an M, and who is to build a church for the repose of his first wife's soul, and then wed one whom he loves in secret," said Cicely.

"And does her Christian name begin with a G?" said the archer.

"If it does, more wonderful things have happened," said the waiting-maiden; "and I know how a minstrel might earn

a tunic of green silk, embroidered at the neck with silver roses."

"For such fair reward," said Eustace, taking off his cap, and bowing to Cicely, "I would do much to serve so beautiful a maiden as mistress Cicely, who will be a squire's lady before Martinmas."

"Oh, the Virgin! if that was not told me by the old gipsy fortuneteller!" exclaimed Cicely.—"What kind of a man is he to be, sir minstrel?"

"Young and handsome, with fair hair and blue eyes," said Eustace.

"Our blessed Lady protect me!" cried Cicely, crossing herself—"the very man! But how could you know?—are you a fortuneteller?"

"It is written in your face, pretty maiden," said Eustace; "and the characters are doubtless also scrolled on your palm."

"What is twice told, must be true," said Cicely: "but come along with me,  
sir

sir minstrel, and you shall play before the ladies."

"Nay, nay, mistress Cicely, you know it is contrary to father Jerome's orders, any stranger being admitted within the castle," said the archer.

"Ay, or into the warder's tower," said the damsel; "and if you pretend to stop this handsome young minstrel from entering the castle, I will tell father Jerome the moment he returns, that you not only admitted him, but also the gipsy fortune-teller."

"You forget, mistress Cicely, that it was to pleasure you I let the crone cross the bridge," said the archer.

"A goodly excuse truly," said the maiden; "it will have great weight with the confessor in saving you from the gyves. Not a word more of objections: I will tell him also of your having shot a hart with your crossbow from the west barbican, and the place where you have buried the antlers; and I will tell him——"

“ In the devil’s name, take the minstrel, and bed him in the north-east turret, if you like,” said the archer.

“ Not quite so fast, honest friend,” said the maiden ; “ he who sleeps there must write himself esquire, and put a golden ring on the third finger of my left hand. Ah me ! it wants nearly six months to Martinmas !—Come along, sir minstrel—your are fitter for a lady’s bower than the warder’s gloomy chamber.”

Four waxen lights, in a silver stand, shone on the embroidery at which Adeline and the lady Gertrude were sitting, and but partially illumined the remainder of the chamber. Cicely, seated on a low stool, was reeling silk, and two other maidens were spinning, while at a still greater distance from the light, Eustace was seated, with his harp resting between his legs. Through the narrow window the moon threw a slanting ray on the richly-carved and painted crown of the  
small

small harp, and fell on the hands of the minstrel as he swept the chords.

“Have done with those noisy wheels,” said lady Gertrude, raising her head; “they mar the minstrel’s skill: nay, wenches, don’t think you are to sit with your hands idle. Here, Katrine, wind this primrose-coloured silk—dip your hands in water, girl, and see that you do not soil it.—Cicely, string those beads.—Lady Adeline, does it please you to ask the minstrel for any particular romance or sonnet?”

“Your choice, madam, will be more agreeable to me,” said Adeline.

“Humph!—Sir minstrel, sing, if it so pleases you, the Romance of the Rose,” said lady Gertrude.

“I never made myself master of so gross a libel on the sex I honour,” said Eustace.

“Tush, man!” said lady Gertrude; “there is a great deal of truth in it.

‘Toutes cetez, serez ou futes,  
De fait ou de volonte.”

Eustace struck the chords of the harp, so as to drown the last word in the well-known couplet of the satirical *Lorris*; and although the eyes of lady Gertrude were fixed on him, as asking his opinion of the poet's sentiment, respect for *Adeline* prompted him not to notice it; and without waiting for any particular song being mentioned, he said he would sing one he had learnt from a celebrated *Provençal Troubadour*. After a short prelude on the harp, he sung a sonnet of lord *Emeric's*, expressive of his hopeless passion for *Amarantha*.

While Eustace sung, *Adeline* suspended her work, and looked towards the minstrel with awakened interest; but the lady Gertrude seemed not to take any pleasure in it, and said, when he had ended—“You would shew more judgment, sir minstrel, in singing the songs of so approved a poet as *William de Lorris*, than  
in



in repeating the maudlin verses of this Provençal Troubadour."

"It is fortunate for Lorris," said Eustace, "that he has one lady to speak favourably of him now that he is dead, since it is more than he had while living."

"You mistake," said lady Gertrude: "he is too close a describer and satirist of prevailing manners, fashions, and follies, not to have the approbation of all women who despise the vanities of life. I never hear his poem read without having some of my friends brought so vividly to my mind's eye, that I could swear they were their portraits he had painted.—Well, I declare, lady Adeline, your hair is dressed exactly as he describes it, where he says —bless me! I forget the lines; but they are something about wanton curls flowing on a blushing neck."

"I wear my hair as English maidens have done during many hundred years," said Adeline; "and if there is any impropriety in the fashion, I should wish to

learn it from better authority than that of a poet, who puts an ill construction on the most innocent circumstances."

"Then you will perhaps not despise mine," said lady Gertrude. "Now I am of opinion that every female above fourteen years of age should have her back hair confined in a net, and a modest coverchief veiling the head, and either brought under the chin, as I wear mine, or hanging down on the shoulders and back; by which means nothing but the front of the throat could be seen, and that being well covered with necklaces, no one could see its colour."

"It is a becoming and matronly fashion," said Adeline mildly.

"Matronly! I say it is a modest fashion," said lady Gertrude; "and I would strongly recommend your adopting it before the earl arrives; he is a great admirer of modest attire."

"I am obliged to you, madam, for your anxiety,"

anxiety," said Adeline, "and I shall certainly adopt your recommendation."

Lady Gertrude looked at her with an expression of countenance which seemed to say—"Do you really wish to appear less captivating in Leicester's eyes?" then turning to Eustace, she said—"You have told us some marvellous particulars of this great victory my lord of Leicester has gained over the king, and my maiden, Cicely, says you have a rare gift at divination; now try your skill, and tell me who is to be the greatest man in England twelve months hence."

"It would be a dangerous question to solve, had I the skill," said Eustace; "but to comply in some degree with your wishes, lady, I will say thus much—that he who is the greatest now, will be so to the end of his life."

"Humph!—and is the female who at present shares his rank and honours to continue to do so to the end of his life?" said the lady.

"The

“The papal power is great—the power of God is great,” said Eustace, with a mysterious air. “There is much concealed in the womb of time; but one whose name begins with the same letter as that of one of the archangels, has much to expect from the flaming sword of him whose name commences with the same character as does that of the greatest of the angels of light.”

“Now, by my soul, thou hast inspiration in thee!” said the lady, rising. “Gertrude—Gabriel; Montfort—Michael!—Wenches, retire, and take this wise youth with you: see that he has all due refectation, and a goodly chamber to sleep in.—For the present, sir minstrel, you may withdraw; I will see you ere you depart in the morning.”

Eustace rose, and bowed profoundly; then endeavoured to obtain a glance at Adeline’s face; but it was turned from the light, and he retired without perceiving whether he had been recognised or not.

At

At the dawn of day Eustace quitted the chamber, in a building contiguous to the castle keep, where he had slept, and at the postern of the tower saw a female figure, with a mantle thrown over her head, and gathered to her chin with her left hand, while with the right she beckoned him to approach. He did so, and his guide passed through the hall, and up a spiral stair, nor stopped until they had reached the flagged roof of the south-east turret.—“Wait here, sir minstrel, until I return,” said Cicely, shewing her white teeth and rosy lips through the small aperture she had left in the folds of her mantle.

“Am I to expect the lady who likes mufflers round the heads of fair maidens?” said Eustace.

“No, no, sir minstrel, there will be a four hours’ toilet, and a four hours’ scolding—paints, lotions, and dies: I was kept up until two hours past midnight, debating whether a few stray ringlets from  
under

under the coverchief should be sky blue or saffron-coloured; so let my lady wear whichever locks she may, you are bound in courtesy to sing their praises wherever you go." So saying, Cicely tripped down the stairs, leaving Eustace in the anxious hope that it was Adeline who intended favouring him with an interview.

It was a mild and beautiful morning in the latter end of May: the sun, just rising, illumined the eastern heavens with a yellow radiance; the green leaves of the forest trees were rustled by the light breeze which precursed the orb of heat and light, and the feathered songsters welcomed its approach from their shadowy bowers.

Cicely appeared, and Adeline entered on the turret roof, her face veiled with a wimple of fine silk, and her figure shrouded in a mantle, lined with miniver. Eustace took off his cap, and, as he lowly bowed, the deep colour struggled through the brown die with which he had stained his skin.

"Sir

“ Sir minstrel,” said Adeline, “ I had friends in the late battle, of whose welfare I should be well pleased to hear.”

“ It has been my fortune, noble lady,” said Eustace, “ to see many gallant nobles and knights of both hosts—of whom would you particularly inquire?”

“ You say the earl of Gloucester has gained great renown,” said Adeline—“ how is it with his brother, lord Thomas de Clare?”

“ Whatever honour the earl hath won is shared by his gallant brother,” said Eustace.

“ Was the Provençal lord Emeric in the field?” inquired Adeline.

“ No, madam ; the gay Troubadour has not yet recovered from the accident which befell him, in endeavouring to save the lady Agnes de Clare from banditti,” said Eustace.

“ Good Heavens ! what mischance has befallen Agnes?” said Adeline.

“ The lady is safe, but the Troubadour ——” said Eustace.

“ Oh,

“ Oh, I suppose he is writing sonnets while his hurts are healing,” said Adeline. “ But you say you have seen gallant knights of the king’s party—did you see any who were immediately near the person of prince Edward ?”

“ Yes, madam—Roger Mortimer,” said Eustace.

“ Oh, the brave lord marcher ! a right noble soldier,” said Adeline ; “ but were there none others of a less exalted name ?”

“ It was my good fortune to meet at a very critical moment,” said Eustace, “ with one of the prince’s knights, who has gained a lofty name in Spain.”

Adeline gathered her wimple in her hand, so that her features could not be discerned through the silken gauze.

Eustace added—“ His name is sir Alwyn de Tauheld.”

Adeline remained some moments silent, then said, with a slight tremour in her voice—“ You say, sir minstrel, that it was  
—at



at a very critical moment you saw sir Alwyn?—He is my kinsman, Cicely, of whom you have heard me speak.”

“Yes, my lady, that very handsome knight, who——”

“Pshaw, child!—Kind minstrel, what happened to sir Alwyn?”

“He bravely fought in the battle field, and was one of those who, with prince Edward, slaughtered the Londoners,” said Eustace.

“Ah me! there was a brave youth amongst those London militia, who I would fain hope escaped that dreadful day,” said Adeline; “his name is Eustace Fitz-Richard.”

“To have known he lived in your remembrance, lady,” said the minstrel, “would have been to him a consolation in the moment of death; but he still lives to serve, while the noble Alwyn lies a captive in a castle prison.”

“How say you? Alwyn a prisoner?” said Adeline, with trepidation.

“Yes,

“ Yes, lady ; in violation of all faith, lord Leicester no sooner obtained possession of the person of prince Edward as an hostage, than he seized on sir Alwyn and others, who were known to be stanch friends of the prince, and has committed them close prisoners to different castles.”

“ Alas ! alas ! I have now no hope !” said Adeline, disconsolately.

“ While the great are captive, the less-exalted are still free,” said Eustace ; “ you have but to command, and you will be obeyed.”

“ Minstrel,” said Adeline, after a short pause, “ there is a gallant and a good youth, to whom your allusion well applies ; you say he still lives ; I am here—I might almost say a prisoner, and yet I know not where I could shun the power of him who has placed me here ; but should the moment arrive when an imperious necessity commands my flight, I would trust myself fearlessly to that youth’s honourable guidance.”

Eustace

Eustace sank on one knee.—“ In his name, lady, I tender grateful thanks and lowly homage ; his eye shall be constantly fixed on this turret, and whenever this fair damsel shall suspend a white scarf from the battlement, be assured of instant succour.”

“ I thank thee, kind minstrel, and trust thee : accept this from me, not in requital, but in remembrance,” and she unloosened her *aumonière* from her girdle ; it was a small silken purse, enriched with gold embroidery and flowers of seed pearls, which Eustace knew to be the work of her own hands. He took it and kissed it, then rising, poured the pieces of gold coin it contained into the immediately extended hand of Cicely.—“ Most reverentially shall I preserve this honoured gift,” he said.

“ Santa Maria ! there is the confessor crossing the green !” exclaimed Cicely ; “ what shall we do with the minstrel ? Deuce take the friar ! what has brought him

him back in such a hurry? I thought he was gone to the earl.—Keep yourself quiet here, good sir minstrel; I will bring you your breakfast, and your dinner, and will try and smuggle you out of the castle after night-fall.”

“But should the friar come on to this turret?” said Adeline; “you know he glides about the castle like a troubled spirit.”

“True, my lady, but he has somewhat of a heavy tread,” said Cicely.—“So, sir minstrel, if you hear a step like a malefactor going to the leafless tree, slip down eight steps and push open a door on your left hand, cross the bolt, and remain as still as a mouse until you hear my voice.”

So saying, Cicely followed Adeline down the turret-stairs, leaving Eustace to his meditations. There was a strange mixture of pleasure and of pain in his thoughts; the more agreeable ones were derived from his being permitted by Adeline to watch over her safety—those of a  
more

more gloomy character were founded on the hopelessness of his passion. Had he not felt assured that her more tender feelings were Alwyn's, there could not have required a more striking proof of her indifference towards himself, than her not having penetrated his disguise, her not having recognised his voice. Even her remembrance of him was so expressed, that it might have been spoken of any man, without conveying any strikingly flattering idea; but Alwyn—Alwyn's was the name her voice faltered to utter.

Cicely interrupted his meditations, by bringing him a basket, containing a cold fowl, a tongue, a loaf of bread, and a bottle of wine.—“Now, sir minstrel,” said the damsel, “eat your breakfast; but first tell me honestly, whether you are a real minstrel?”

“Why do you doubt it, pretty Cicely?” said Eustace.

“Because you refused to keep my lady's gold, and gave it all to me,” said Cicely:

“now,

"now, if you are a knight, do tell me—but I hope you are only a squire."

"And should I be the latter, Cicely, you know you have already given me leave to enter a certain chamber, in a certain south-east turret," said Eustace.

"Ay, but I am not to be there at the time," said Cicely.

"Yet I am not to quit it until you come and tell me to open the door," said he.

"Do you think you could punch a hole in this piece of gold you have given me," said the damsel, holding up a coin, "large enough to admit this finger?"

"Certes I am not a goldsmith," said Eustace; "yet if I were pressed, I would do my essay."

"The priest is at hand!" said Cicely, catching at the sound.

"You would not venture to tell the confessor of my being here?" said Eustace.

"Pardie, why not? if his business is to shrift one, it is also to help one at a shift," said

said Cicely ; “ and I would bribe him with all the gold I have.”

“ But he would turn you from the castle,” said Eustace.

“ And here I would not then wish to tarry,” said Cicely : “ oh, I would carry your harp when you journeyed from castle to castle—I should be so happy !”

“ I am under a vow, fair Cicely,” said Eustace, gravely, but fearful of offending one who might, out of revenge, be as ready to tell the friar of his interview and engagement with Adeline, as she had been to threaten the preceding night she would tell of the archer.

“ Under a vow ! what, to a woman ?” exclaimed the damsel.

“ No, to the Virgin,” he replied.

“ What vow can a man have to make to the Virgin ?” said Cicely.

“ A vow of honourable service,” said Eustace.

“ But the priest will grant you absolution from it,” said the pertinacious damsel.

“No one of less degree than the pope, or his legate, could,” said Eustace.

“Ah, you are some great man in disguise!” said Cicely, stepping back, for she had been standing near him as he sat on a low inner projection of the battlement, while he prepared to eat his breakfast; “and now I declare I never saw a man with such white hands, fair hair, and blue eyes, have such a swart complexion.”

“But if I were in disguise, would you betray me, Cicely?” said Eustace, thinking this half admission the readiest way of putting an end to the subject.

“No, sir,” said Cicely, blushing and courtesying; “I would keep your secret for my lady Adeline’s sake; and I hope you will forgive my boldness, and not tell her, nor think any more of what I have said, my lord.”

Eustace smiled, and the damsel withdrew.

Several hours passed away, during which Eustace was left to ruminate undisturbed.



turbed. His situation became irksome, from the consideration that his being clandestinely in the castle might, if discovered by the confessor, who, it appeared, was invested with full authority, be the means, by throwing him into confinement, of thwarting his project of devoting himself to the watching over Adeline's safety; being fully convinced that the earl of Leicester, who had broken through so many solemn engagements, and had not hesitated to throw, without a shadow of justice, some of the highest personages in the realm into prison, would have no measure in his severity towards an obscure individual who presumed to cross the path of his private affairs: not that Eustace, while he was thus perdue on the summit of a turret, without venturing to look over the battlements, lest he should be observed from below, entertained the slightest regret that he had thus placed himself in the way of danger; but he was chagrined to think that the power of his future ser-

vice to Adeline should depend on the discretion of the coquettish Cicely.

It was past the hour of midday repast, when the damsel reappeared on the turret. It was obvious that, whatever might be her present estimation of the minstrel, she had not neglected some of that devotion to her toilet which she had laid to the charge of her mistress ; she entered from the low doorway with a peculiar demureness of mien, strongly contrasted with the smile which partly discovered her white teeth, and the bright glance from her hazel eyes.

“ Well, mistress Cicely,” said Eustace, “ have you brought any commands for the minstrel ? am I to play before your lady, or take my departure from the castle ? ”

“ To do the first would be right pleasant to us poor damsels, who are moped to death in this gloomy old tower,” said Cicely ; “ and to do the latter would be right clever in you.”

“ How

“How so?” asked Eustace.

“What do you think?” said Cicely, and her rosy lips opened into a still more decisive smile—“what do you think?”

“What should I, or can I?” said Eustace.

“Why only think,” said the damsel, “the friar has not only locked and brought away the keys of the drawbridge and outer gates, but he has locked those of the tower itself; and here you and us all are prisoners! ha, ha, ha! did you ever know any thing half so pleasant? he thought to lock all the men out, and he never dreamt of your being in my turret!”

“Very pleasant truly,” said Eustace; “but is there no other way of my getting out, than by beating out the old fool’s brains?”

“Beat out father Jerome’s brains!” said the damsel, putting up her hands in either real or assumed horror—“beat out the brains of a saint! a holy man, who stays on earth only to shew us poor sinners the

way to heaven!—Oh, no, no, it must not be thought of—you must try and make yourself content here, and if you will but be quiet, and promise not to make a noise, you shall be so snug, nobody will be a bit the wiser.”

“Gallantry forbid, fair Cicely,” said Eustace, “that I should not cheerfully submit to such sweet captivity as the having you for my warder; but what say you, should the friar discover me, and order me to be dragged into the prison vault?”

“Why, beat out his brains in earnest,” said the damsel; “and I will help you with all my heart, in requital for many a dull lecture he has droned me to sleep with, and meagre diet he has doomed me to, because my thoughts would not chime to his tune.”

“I perceive this holy man is not a favourite with you, fair Cicely.”

“He a holy man! but mum,” and she put her finger to her lips, and then spoke  
in

in a lower key ; “ I believe, in my conscience, that that tall, thin, sanctified, old friar, is as great a rogue as ever knelt barefooted at the altar, and then got drunk in his cell ; and—and——”

“ I see you will befriend me at a push,” said Eustace, “ without caring much for the anger of your confessor : so now, my good girl, tell me how I am to get out of the castle ?”

“ So that is all you are thinking of,” said Cicely, poutingly, “ after I had taken such pains to assure you how comfortable you might be in it : well, sir minstrel, I don’t see why I should run risks for one who is in such a hurry to be gone ; and now I bethink me, it is a dangerous thing to thwart the confessor—a very dangerous thing.”

“ You mistake me, dear Cicely—I don’t want to quit the castle before there is occasion ; but it would ill become a soldier to find himself taken prisoner by a begging friar.”

“So you are a soldier! I thought as much,” said Cicely; “and you will stop until I tell you to be gone?”

“Ay, marry will I—always recollecting my vow.”

“Your vow! you have not told me what it is,” said the damsel.

“Nor can I till it is performed, and it will not be performed as long as I remain within these walls.”

“Our Lady forgive you for leasing! could you not supply the place of that youth you promised to bring, and who is to watch for my putting a white scarf on this battlement, and who is then to come to the lady Adeline’s aid? Is he a more proper man than you? even if he is, you have the advantage of being within the castle.”

“O’ my faith, Cicely, you are too sharp-witted for a poor minstrel.”

“Then make yourself content,” said the damsel; “remain quiet, and I will bring

bring you a dainty dinner, and a flask of father Jerome's best Burgundy."

Towards night-fall Cicely hastily appeared on the turret, and beckoned Eustace to follow her, saying that it was now the hour when the confessor was wont to retire to his chamber—"To meditate on holy things, he says," said the damsel; "but those who have peeped through a hole in the tapestry, know that he don't keep the key of the wine crypt, without duly and daily qualifying himself to be a judge of its contents; and then you know, sir minstrel, an hour or two of sleep is of use in carrying off the fumes of his studious application; so that we have him safe these three hours at least, and my lady is waiting to receive you."

"Do you mean the lady Adeline?"

"No, sir minstrel, but my lady Gertrude: and I would have you treat with all reverence a goddess of my making."

"Of thy making, Cicely—how meanest thou?"

“ Look at her cheeks—it was I gave them that beautiful bloom, which vies with the wild rose,” said the waiting-maiden ; “ it was I stained her eyelashes black, and pencilled her eyebrows into that continued line ; it was I——”

“ You little telltale, you will betray all the mysteries of your lady’s toilet,” said Eustace.

“ And why should I not commend my own skill,” said Cicely, “ when the being I have made expects to become greater than the queen ?”

“ Doubtless, Cicely, nor do I wonder at your having fallen desperately in love with your own handy-work.”

“ Not at all,” said the damsel, “ neither would I have you ; so I have told you all this, and would a great deal more, rather than you should be charmed out of your heart by the work of my own hands, bestowed on my lady.”

“ Then I may admire these ringlets  
you



you have curled so beautifully," said Eustace, twisting his fingers in one of them.

"Oh yes, but then they are my own real growing hair," said Cicely; "and all the time I was twisting them, I sang and was thinking——The saints protect me! we must make haste, or my lady will forget the sweet looks she has been practising this hour past before a mirror."

"But for whom is all this care bestowed?" said Eustace.

"Did I not tell you that the confessor has brought word the earl of Leicester may be expected every hour? so we are all in the greatest possible bustle; and as my lady cannot dress in a minute, it is necessary she should always be ready to receive him to advantage, although it causes many a fretful pang that so much pains has been bestowed in vain: but it will not be so to-day, if you, sir minstrel, will sing, wherever you go, the praises of——but hush! that is a dangerous secret——come along, sir minstrel." So saying, Cicely tripped

down the turret stairs, followed by Eustace.

The chamber into which he was ushered was of small dimensions, but decorated with rich carved work, and the walls hung with tapestry of splendid colours. It was lit by wax lights, which stood in silver branches on two grotesque stands. In an alcove at the upper end was the lady Gertrude, reclining on a sofa covered with silk, so richly embroidered with flowers of a thousand dyes, that the pale blue ground could scarcely be seen. The lady was richly attired, and wore that singular article of dress called a gorget, which covering the throat and the head as high as the temples, was there folded back, and twisted towards the forehead into the resemblance of horns. A wreath of leaves, of wrought gold, resembling a coronet, encircled the summit of the head, and directly in the division of the hair; on her forehead was an ornament of chased gold and rubies; encircling her throat, over the  
gorget,

gorget, was a collar of gold, blazing with diamonds and precious stones; and on her fingers were numerous rings, equally resplendent. The point of one shoe appeared on a footstool, but the flowing robe of green satin embroidered with gold did not permit more to be seen.

When Eustace, seated on a stool with his harp before him, looked on the lady Gertrude, on whom the light of the waxen tapers beamed with a mellowed softness, he was ready to do homage to that art which could, in appearance, efface the ravages of time, and make a woman, whose mind and bosom was corroded with baleful passions, look so majestically lovely.

“I have sent for you, sir minstrel,” said the lady Gertrude, “to cheat hope delayed of its sickening pangs—thinkest thou music will do it?”

“Ay, madam, where our hope is for that which is good; but it sounds discords where the mind is bent on evil.”

“How say you, sir minstrel?” said the lady,

lady, half rising from her recumbent posture: "ah! it had escaped me—thou hast a knowledge beyond that of singing and harping; but I must not now look into the book of fate—sing to me a song—tax thy memory—let it be of a knight, who after years of perfidy became true to his first and long-deserted love."

"I fear me, noble lady," said the minstrel, "I must rather tax my invention than my memory."

"Why, thou art more cynical than Lorris," said the lady; "dost thou pretend that a man who has done wrong never makes atonement?"

"Doubtless he may make atonement to God," said the minstrel, "although he does not to the person he has injured."

"But how will God admit of atonement," said the lady, "when the sufferer is crying out for justice?"

"The priesthood say that the building of a church is more acceptable to God," replied the minstrel, "than the fleeting thanks

thanks of the injured, who have become reconciled to the transgressor."

"Ha! a church endowed," said the lady, and passed her hand over her forehead; "it was foretold me he would raise one to the memory of her—her he has injured; but he must otherwise atone to me.—Sir minstrel, thou art a highly-gifted youth—know you not some of those sublime mysteries by which men are wrought on to do deeds contrary to the fixed purpose of their soul?"

"I have heard of such," he said, with a reserved air.

The lady moved from the sofa—she looked around—there was no one in the room—she approached Eustace, who rose and stood with his left hand resting on the harp, and his head bent downwards—"I have been told," said the lady, in a repressed voice, "that the destined period of my fate approaches—that she whose dominant star hath hitherto triumphed over mine, and kept me in unworthy obscurity,

scurity, is on the point of being called hence; but my soul misgives me—I fear that that young creature you yesternight beheld seated opposite to me hath become a dangerous rival—thinkest thou, were his hand free, he would wed her?”

Eustace had learnt sufficient from Langley's prolixity in recounting every thing the gipsy fortuneteller had said, as well as from what Cicely had hinted, to understand something of the lady Gertrude's history and expectations; and in the circumstances in which he was now placed, and finding that Adeline's safety, perhaps life, was compromised, he hesitated not so to frame his answers, as might, by leading lady Gertrude to fully open her mind, enable him to counteract her intentions, should they prove to be evil.—“His soul is filled with aims of highest ambition,” he answered.

“Wouldst thou then infer,” said the lady, “that an alliance with this maiden would be incompatible?”

“Doubtless,”

“Doubtless,” was the answer.

“But he is a man of ardent passions,” said the lady; “even ambition must give place to love.”

“Experience should have informed you otherwise,” said the minstrel.

“Ha! thou speakest sooth, good minstrel; and yet I have heard of foolish actions committed by wise men to humour a coy but beautiful creature; and he—he thinks himself so great, that he may do what pleasures him without danger to his safety.”

“No one can do that,” said the minstrel.

“Right—it would be gross infatuation in the earl to wed this maiden. But this wife—this nun that should have been—he will build a church to her memory, and then—let me hear it from thy lips, thou gifted of Heaven!—whom will he then make his bride?” and as the lady spoke she drew herself up to her full height, and awaited his answer with an air of proud confidence,

confidence, which clearly told whom she expected he would name.

“It would not be for me, who have not viewed the horoscope which ruled at thy birth, noble lady, to be over bold in my prediction; but such skill as I have acquired under that sublime teacher of the occult sciences, Aben el Mahoun, assures me that one born with such eyes as now overpower me with their effulgent lustre is destined to a brilliant fate.”

“Mine has been obscure, wretched, detestable!” said the lady, vehemently.

“The sisters are unwinding the web,” said the minstrel; “and when it is fully displayed, it may be brilliant, happy, and so prized, that twenty years of suffering will be forgotten in one day’s triumph.”

“Oh, glorious prospect! But tell me, wise youth, hath Aben el Mahoun told thee aught of my horoscope, which, as he read it to me, so well accords with thy prophetic words?”

“The



“The sage would ill merit his preeminence,” said the minstrel, “did he betray the fruits of his deep researches.”

“Would to Heaven he were here!—Kind minstrel, wilt thou serve me?”

“I am bound to shew my sense of your graciousness and hospitable reception,” he replied.

“Then wilt thou go from me to the sage Aben el Mahoun, and request of him once more to search the heavens, and tell me if the hour is at hand?”

“He has been obliged to retire into some obscure spot,” said the minstrel, “to shun the fury of the London populace; but I have a clue by which I can discover him.”

“Do so, good minstrel—alas! but how wilt thou get hence? the confessor—gaoler would be a fitter title—has locked the gates, and keeps the keys on his own person—Pshaw! am I to be thwarted by a cozening priest? I will obtain the keys,  
and

and at midnight thou shalt depart—when canst thou be here again?”

“On the night after the next,” said the minstrel.

“Thou wilt not fail me—no. Bear this precious gem to Aben el Mahoun—he gave it more heed than any other I wore when last I saw him; he will know it and prize it: tell him to come hither, or to make thee the bearer of his knowledge; I will take heed for thy being readmitted within the castle. Now try and sooth my agitated spirits with thy minstrelsy.”

It was with no slightly-pleased sensations Eustace struck the harp, and sang to the lady Gertrude. The gates of the castle would now be opened for his egress and ingress, and he should thus be enabled to watch over the safety of Adeline, with the power of maturing his means of rescuing her from danger, whenever it should threaten.

A little past midnight Cicely entered the closet, where he had remained since  
he

he had been dismissed from the presence of the lady Gertrude, and with her finger to her lip, as indicating that he should be silent, led the way, with stealthy steps, along a winding passage, which was terminated by a postern door, the key of which she produced, and in a few moments they were on the green.

“Thank Heaven the night is so cloudy!” said the damsel; “should the friar be on the watch, he will scarcely see us from his window—it is in the west turret; so come this way, and we can glide round by these buildings, and then—follow me—but don’t speak for your life.”

Without interruption they reached the gateway-tower—“Hubert! Hubert!” Cicely softly called.

“What has brought thee, Cicely?” answered an archer.

“Ask no questions,” said the damsel, “but take these keys, open the gate, and let down the bridge: the lady Gertrude  
sends

sends this minstrel youth on an especial message to the earl," said the damsel; "and mark me, Hubert, neither you, nor one of your fellows, must say aught of it; for if the confessor hears of it, you will all be shorter by the head before you are a week older."

"By our Lady, mistress Cicely, I will have nought to do in so serious a business!" said Hubert.

"And, by my lady, master Hubert," said the damsel, "if you refuse to do her and my bidding, your head had better take leave of your shoulders on the instant; so no more words, but do my orders; and when you hear this minstrel's harp the night after the next, admit him into the castle as quietly as you now let him out—So—And now, sir minstrel, I wish thee good night, and a brief absence and a pleasant return."

"Good night, my pretty Cicely! my absence is as constrained as my return shall

shall be cheerful," said Eustace, as he stepped on to the bridge.

"A murrain on these harpers! they bewitch all the women, from the waiting-maiden to the princess," muttered Hubert.

"Hold thy grumbling, honest man," said the damsel; "you know not the important business on which I am employed—but perhaps, dear Hubert, I may one day tell thee."

"Ah, Cicely! when will the day come when you will give me all your thoughts?" said the archer.

"Humph! as my lady says, when she hears what she don't choose to answer—but live in hope—the minstrels say it is a lover's breakfast, dinner, and supper."

"Slender diet, Cicely."

"Do something to make thee an esquire," said the damsel, as she quitted the gateway, "and thou mayst have more substantial fare."

Eustace found his servant Langley in  
the

the woodman's hut, where he had ordered him to remain after he should have seen him enter the castle. He now desired him to go in search of such of his former companions as he considered could be trusted in a service of danger, where the reward should be great, and so arrange with them that a score of them might be gathered together at brief notice. This was too much to Langley's taste for him not to enter on it with alacrity; but he objected to the smallness of the number of men to be employed—"A score of men, sir, will be too few to attack the castle, scantily as it is garrisoned."

"Who said it was to be attacked?—but should more men be wanted, can you have them?"

"Do you ask that question, sir," said Langley, "at the very moment when the king and barons have dismissed their forces? Why, sir, if you want a thousand men for any enterprise, you could not have chosen a happier moment. There  
are

are hundreds of men curse the battle of Lewes for being too decisive—it has thrown them out of bread, sir, and the poor rogues don't know which way to turn themselves to earn a livelihood; give me but the order, and tell me what wages I am to promise, and you shall have as many spears as you list.”

CHAPTER III.  
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AT the appointed hour, Eustace returned to the castle, and was alarmed by the various sounds which assailed his ears from a place which was usually so quiet; but when he reached the drawbridge, which was down, and had unobstructed entered the gateway, the occasion was explained by the appearance of several of Leicester's followers, who filled the warder's tower, and by the information which Hubert whispered in his ear, that the earl had arrived an hour before.—“You are just in time,” said the archer, “for the warder is now with the earl receiving his commands, and when he comes back and has the bridge up, he will not let it down, I trow, for e'er a minstrel or lady in the land.”

“And

“And you would have been right glad had the youth been shut out,” said Cicely, who with her face shrouded in a hood, and dark cloak concealing her whole figure, had unobserved come up; “but I would have you to know, master Hubert, that a woman, be she gent or be she common, will get a man, if she lists, both in and out of a castle gate, in spite of surly warders and dull-pated sentinels.—But this way, sir minstrel—crowded as the castle is, there is a quiet nook left for you—but it is not in the south-east turret.”

“That is cruel of you, fair Cicely.”

“And it is because I am fair,” said the damsel.

“To whom?” said the minstrel.

“My husband, if ever I should have such a pest,” said the damsel: “but tread cautiously, sir minstrel. Ha! I am glad to see you have that large cloak and broad bonnet: I will answer should we be challenged—come, this way.”

They entered the castle keep at the

same postern door by which they had passed out on the former night, and Eustace was almost immediately led into a small vaulted stone chamber, lit by a lamp suspended from the roof.—“This is but a comfortless chamber, sir minstrel; but you are only to remain here till the earl is abed.”

“Is he going to make any long stay?” Eustace asked, with seeming indifference of manner.

“He has ordered his followers to horse at daybreak,” replied the damsel; “whether he is to start with them I know not: but I must go and tell my lady you are here.”

Many minutes had not elapsed before Cicely returned, and desiring him to throw aside his bonnet and cloak, conducted him, with noiseless steps, to the same chamber in which he had last seen the lady Gertrude. She was attired in much the same style as then, but her countenance was bereft of that studied sweetness
which

which had for a moment charmed him, and now indicated the most violent conflicting passions, which had a perhaps still greater effect on her frame, from the effort with which she endeavoured to repress their appearance. Her manner was intended to be mild and courteous, but it was unsteady and abrupt.—“What message bear you from the sage Mahoun?” she asked.

“He bade me tender to you this scroll,” said the minstrel, presenting on his bended knee an open slip of vellum.

“What means he by this discourteous mode?” said the lady, with an offended air; “but true—these sages mind not ceremonial.—Well, sir minstrel, he says that he has instructed thee to solve my doubts.”

“And thus hath he instructed me,” replied Eustace.—“Simon Montfort hath attained the summit of his power——”

“How?—no crown?—no kingdom?” the lady abruptly questioned.

"Such were the words of Aben el Mahoun," said the minstrel; "but if I might explain them, I would say he has the kingdom, although he does not wear the crown."

"And what is a kingdom without the regal diadem?" said the lady. "It is the crown—the crown I would have him wear!—but go on; what did he further say?"

"That the hour was not yet arrived," replied the minstrel, "when the church would be avenged on the impious pair who had dared to break off a heavenly marriage, and consummate an earthly one."

"Not yet arrived! methinks the church is tardy in its vengeance on the princess," said the lady gloomily; "and yet I would not that he, false as he is, should be included in the penalty. But say on, what hopes for me?"

"Your ruling star looks benign, and as it more nearly approximates its conjunction

tion with the fiery Mars, receives a glory on its radiant face, far outshining all others of the planetary host."

The lady twice paced along the chamber, and said, yet as though speaking to herself—"It may be so: Montfort met me with a kindness of mien I have not experienced this length of years; I was wrong to chafe him with my jealous fears of this unblown rose.—Ha! sir minstrel, did he say aught was to be apprehended from a new and obscure source?"

"On the contrary, that all the earthly agencies were fulfilling a destiny whose glory was to be undiminished," said the minstrel; "and the sage further desired me to add, with his grateful acknowledgment for the jewel you sent by my hand, that it is his recommendation to you to await with patience the short space which will now intervene before the completion of thine own and the earl's horoscope."

The lady seated herself on the sofa beneath the canopied recess, and for some

moments seemed lost in thought. At length she bade the minstrel approach, and seat himself on one of the footstools. He did so, and placed his small harp, as though he expected to be desired to play. —“I ask not for thy minstrelsy,” she said, “but I would speak to thee on matters of moment. What I have been, or what I am, more than thou perceivest, it were unnecessary to dwell on: I am in truth a captive in the castle of which I am called the mistress, and am so watched and controlled by the man who acts as my confessor, that I have not the power of doing any thing of my own free agency: thus I —I, who aim at a crown, find myself glad to obtain the assistance of a strolling minstrel.—Nay, sir, I mean not to offend, but only to make you sensible, that nothing but the urgency and importance of my affairs, together with the peculiarity of my situation, could have moved me to make an unknown stranger my confidant and agent.”

“Madam,

“Madam, may I entreat that, while you make use of my poor services, you will be content to command, for the present and the future, without confiding any thing of the past?”

“Truly thou art discreet and tender to a grieved spirit,” said the lady; “and well does so much prudence assure me of my good fortune in having met with thee. Thou must know then, I am now full confident, that when the princess Eleanor is once in the grave, Leicester will redeem his pledge, and make me his wife. Hast thou seen the princess?”

“Yes, madam, at the palace of the Savoy,” replied the minstrel.

“Ay, she queened it there some months past,” said the lady; “she is a king’s daughter, and a king’s sister. Dost thou think Leicester would make such an one her successor as—as—as that lady Adeline you saw last night?”

“Oh, she is a pearl of highest beauty!

the earth never bore a more lovely rose!" exclaimed the minstrel.

"Out on thee, man! reserve such figures for thy sonnets. But wouldest thou think," and she half raised herself, and drooped her left hand and wrist over a cushion of the sofa, and looked softly on him—"wouldest thou think me a fit successor for the princess Eleanor?"

"He who sang her praises for gold and rich apparel," replied the minstrel, "would chant yours from admiration."

"Flatterer! to shun the jealousy of Eleanor, and to avoid injuring Leicester with his wife's relatives, I have been content to sacrifice myself; but the hour approaches when I am to be recompensed for all my sufferings. It is that I may be prepared for that hour I now confide in you. My means are small, but how insignificant are my enemies! This Franciscan friar—this father confessor, is Montfort's evil spirit; it is he that ministers to his passions, as the foul fiend would have

have done to the son of the blessed Virgin, when he tempted him; this man—priest I will not call him—this man is my mortal foe: it is he who has brought forward this pearl, this rose, this girl, Adeline, to cross my path, at the very moment when, confident of the approaching death of the princess, I might be certain Montfort would redeem his word to me. It matters not whether Leicester were to marry her or not, should he become entangled in her snares; for, whatever may be her personal beauty, she has, I know, wit enough to manage the hottest spirit that ever swelled the proud breast of man—with his head in her lap, he would be beyond my reach. Now, my good friend,” added the lady, and she almost passed her fingers through the luxuriant locks of the minstrel, “tell me what is to be done with this friar and this lady?”

Eustace found that the point was at length attained for which he had continued his fictitious character to the lady

Gertrude, and that he must now, by persevering in it, be really serviceable to the object of his hopeless love.—“It is not for one, so ignorant and humble as I am,” he said, “to dictate what should be done in an affair deeply interesting to a person so exalted as her at whose feet I am lowly seated.”

“Its being so deeply interesting,” said the lady, “is the reason why I cannot speak out; I would rather trust to the cooler judgment of an indifferent person.”

“What would you think, madam, of persuading the earl to send the friar on a mission to the pope, touching the unholy marriage with the princess Eleanor?”

“Ha! by mine honour there would be a twelvemonth gained,” said the lady exultingly, “and I want no more!—Ah, but the friar would not go; he is one of the prime movers of the inferior orders of monks, who have given so much umbrage to his holiness. No, no, the friar is too cunning; he will not go to Rome.”

“Can

“Can you not prejudice the earl against him?”

“Impossible! the friar has him on every side—ability to control in argument, and a perfect knowledge of Leicester’s faith in the saving power of the church—in fact, Montfort is his pupil in politics, and his slave in religion. I tell thee, this friar is a dangerous man, one not to be counteracted by ordinary means—thou understandest me?”

“If he cannot be overcome by ordinary means,” said the minstrel, “what are those which might be employed?”

“Do you ask that of me? have you not wit enough to know the simplest way of unravelling a knot which keeps you from that you want? What, are you moody? are you thinking of it? Ay, I see the dull cloud is clearing from off thy brow. But those men were too rough who knocked that other priest on the head at Canterbury. A drug—what say you?”

you? It would be a pity to give it to the pearl—would it?”

Eustace successfully stifled the emotions which agitated his soul.—“Is the priest’s life or death,” he said, “of consequence until the time arrives when Montfort must declare his purpose towards the lady?”

“Perhaps not paramountly so,” she answered, “but I hate him; and I never see that girl without hating either her or myself. When we see a toad, we heap stones upon it; so would I crush and bury those I hate.”

“But you could not so destroy the jewel in the toad’s head; it would remain before you a light for ever blazing.”

“How say you, sir minstrel? I warned you from poetical flights—I have not a conscience to be scared. El Mahoun—many of those Eastern Jews are profoundly skilled in the preparation of poisons—go to him, and obtain such as shall be quick in its effect, yet leave no visible signs of its ravages; not such a base drug

as

as discoloured the skin, and cast off the nails and hair, of Richard of Gloucester, yet touched not the earl's life. Take this purse, and these jewels, and haste thee to El Mahoun."

"Might your servant venture to observe, illustrious lady," said the minstrel, bending down his head so that his flowing locks shadowed his face, "that El Mahoun loves not to be thwarted? he advises you to await the unfolding of the web which has been spun by the Fates—he says, that the earthly agencies are fulfilling the behests of destiny."

"I, you, he, are earthly agencies," said the lady with rapidity, "and we must do our part. Do my bidding, and you shall have present wealth, and in a little space, lands and honours—refuse me, and your body shall hang at the warder's gate, to scare vagrants from my door."

"Your slave but dropped in your ear the counsel of the sage El Mahoun; but
your

your wisdom is greater than his, and I obey."

"I commend thy prudence, and was only chafed when I thought thy counsel proceeded from unwillingness to do me this service," said the lady. "Nor think, sir minstrel, although I employ you in this affair, that I am altogether destitute of other aid: my purpose was taken before I saw you, and I am never without the means of carrying it into effect; but I would not have men's tongues clamouring against me, as they did against William de Valence, because the De Clares, and so many others, swallowed the poison at his table. I would have a more delicate, a less grossly-acting poison, than this," and as she spoke, she took from a small pocket in her hanging sleeve a flat ivory box.—"This contains a poison I have tried—why startest thou?—I tried it on a fawn I petted on the green, and the poor brute died in such agony, that all the household exclaimed it had been poisoned.

poisoned. Use it I would not, could I procure a better; see that thou gettest such for me from the learned El Mahoun."

"Your commands shall be obeyed; when do you desire to have it?"

"The girl—I shall have no difficulty in giving it her; but the friar——" and the lady meditated—"the friar neither eats nor drinks at my table; he even superintends the dressing of his own viands, and he himself keeps the key of the wine crypt.—Ha! I have thee, priest!—Thou must manage this for me, good minstrel. This cursed friar is fond of fruit, and having lived long in southern climes, complains greatly of the crude products of this island, and mocks at the monks of Saint Benedict, their boasted vineyard at Saint Peter's monastery; thou must try if any ship should chance to have brought a jar of grapes from Italy, France, or Spain—purchase such, and let El Mahoun prepare them, then send them to the friar, in the name of a foreign brother of his order."

"Which,

“Which, when procured,” said the minstrel, “the young lady is to be ministered to?”

“Yes; when he is eating of the juicy grapes, some confections shall suffice her.”

“I have heard,” said the minstrel, “El Mahoun complain, that he is frequently at a great loss for certain ingredients necessary to his sublime mysteries, and have seen him wrath, even to the tearing of his venerable beard, that mere bunglers in science have wasted most rare and precious simples in their crude attempts, while he has not been able to procure them, without the difficult process of separating them from the drugs with which these tyros had blended them. El Mahoun is now in an obscure retirement, where he has no means of obtaining any ingredients which he does not already possess; indeed, there is a great scarcity of such as are rare and costly, since the late destruction of the Jews. Perhaps some small portion of the powder contained in
that

that ivory box may be an indispensable ingredient for the poison you require, and which El Mahoun may not possess."

"Thy forethought is admirable—take it," and she gave him the box, which he grasped with a joy he could scarcely so far repress as not to betray him; "but mark me, bring it back filled with an active poison, as well as that which is for the lady Adeline—I would never be without such aid."

It was with a powerfully-agitated mind Eustace followed Cicely from the lady Gertrude's bower, to the stone chamber which had been prepared for his use.

"Marry, sir minstrel," said the damsel, "you have had a long parley with my lady. Not once did I hear your harp—and all I could do I could not gather more than a word here and there, of which I could make nothing: here, take a cup of wine, for you must not think of sleeping; the lady Adeline is coming to speak with you——Hist!—no, there is no one stirring;
ring;

ring; remain still, and I will bring her instantly."

Eustace swallowed the wine, of which he stood much in need, so greatly had he been agitated by the discovery of the lady Gertrude's intentions.

In a short space the damsel returned, accompanied by Adeline.—“The cruelty of my situation, sir minstrel,” said Adeline, “must be my apology for thus troubling you, and departing from the reserve demanded by my sex and condition; I have considered my hasty request for the assistance of the generous Eustace Fitz-Richard, and I fear it was imprudent.”

“Do you doubt his fidelity, noble lady?” said the minstrel.

“No, no; I know not one on whom I would more fearlessly rely; but I—I must not ask of him his kind services—and yet I know not whose else to claim. You say the De Clares have quarrelled with Leicester—I could claim their protection; but they are rash, hotheaded men; they would

would leap at the lion's throat, but they could not wrest from him his prey—he has the kingdom at his feet. Lord Emeric would make such service the ground of inordinate demands.”

“ But Eustace Fitz-Richard would not,” said the minstrel; “ I have heard him say, within these forty hours, that he is about to take up the cross, and proceed either to Spain or Palestine; yet that he would consider himself singularly blessed, could he render any service to the noble lady who so long honoured his father's house with her presence.”

“ I believe him generous, and gifted with noblest qualities,” said Adeline; “ but—but it is not right in a maiden to ask the succour of a young man unallied to her in blood; but go, kind minstrel, and tell his worthy father that I am placed in a most perilous situation. Lord Leicester has this night threatened me with an immediate marriage with sir Adam Gordon, to whom he, by regular deeds,
has,

has, as my guardian, affianced me, and, as a pledge of his faith, has put the Scottish knight in possession of my lands. To this detested marriage Montfort has dared to offer me an alternative; I cannot speak it; let it suffice, death were more preferable: he glozed over the proposition with loftiest prospects——no matter, my choice is made—I must flee! My lands are lost; I have but slender means wherewith to reward my preservers; and I may have nothing to maintain myself, should I be so happy as to escape the power of the tyrant—but all risks must be run.”

“I will forfeit my life but the means for your flight shall be supplied,” said the minstrel; “but when will you be ready to depart?”

“Alas! there is the difficulty, and which my indignation has increased. I rashly told lord Leicester I would flee, and he coolly thanked me for the warning. This castle will be so closely watched, that all hopes of egress are debarred.”

“We

“We must take it by storm,” said Eustace.

“Alas! there would be little hopes of that against a man possessing such means of succouring it as does the earl,” said Adeline; “besides, he tells me that none are permitted to carry arms but those to whom he grants permission. No, no, it is not with violence he must be opposed. He goes hence at break of day, and is to return in a fortnight, to receive my final answer, affecting not to consider such the one I this night gave; in that space, sir minstrel, you may do much to serve me.”

“There is other danger threatens you, and which renders a more prompt flight necessary,” said the minstrel.—“Ha! listen in the passage, Cicely—I surely heard a noise.” The damsel stepped out.—“Lady,” and he spoke low and quick, “be ware of the lady Gertrude!—Did not a fawn die horribly on the green? Your face is blanched; you have nothing to fear in that way, until I shall have again re-
turned

turned hither; but let no scrupulous delicacy prevent your adopting the means I shall then point out for your safety.—Heard you no one, Cicely?”

“Nothing but the dogs baying at the moon,” said the damsel.—“But good, my lady, we had better depart—the earl’s followers will be stirring.”

Adeline’s face was indeed blanched; and as she looked with a more intense gaze on the minstrel, as if to read in his countenance the whole dreaded truth, her eyes became distended, and the colour rapidly overspreading her fair skin, she said, in low hurried tones—“Ha! I thought that voice was familiar to my ears.—Yes, yes, I can trust in thy fidelity, and not less so in thy generosity.” So saying, she waved to him her hand, and hastily withdrew.

“She knows me, and she confides in me!” said Eustace, exultingly; “Adeline trusts in my fidelity, and also in my generosity! Alas! why was the latter
coupled

coupled with the former?—and yet why not? Have I deceived myself?—do I really hope? This is no time to solve such subtle questions; I am known and trusted—my business is to act, and prove myself worthy of her confidence.”

“So,” said Cicely, when she reentered the chamber, “my young lady can at length recollect a voice, though she could not see through a brown die: but now will you tell me, sir knight, how you are to get out of the castle?”

“By the lady Gertrude’s orders,” said Eustace.

“They are not worth the value of a cast coverchief,” said the damsel.

“Then I must be altogether indebted to you, my pretty Cicely,” said Eustace.

“The Virgin be our guide, when gallant knights want to gain their own ends!” said Cicely; “I have been pretty Cicely, and charming Cicely, and dear Cicely, and a hundred other pet titles, when all the time you cared no more for me than if I

had been as ugly as the old gipsy who promised me a squire for a husband. But still I must do my best ; so you must know the reason why you could not be sheltered in the south-east turret—I have there got my mother ; and now comes my scheme—the good woman arrived yesterday, and if you will condescend to put on her clothes, I think I can promise you a seat on the crupper of old Robert's horse, who will be one of the first of the earl's train to leave the castle at break of day ; but, mind, you must pass yourself for the wife of an honest franklin ; if you have wit, which I don't think you lack, you will have no great difficulty ; her travelling cloak has a famous hood, and as it will be scarcely light, and the men stupid from drink, and want of sleep, you may get off without any very great risk of being hanged for a spy."

As there appeared to be no other feasible plan, Eustace readily consented, and, with Cicely's aid, was equipped in a garb which

which differed in nothing from that of a man's of the same rank, but the length of the tunics, which were seen beneath the cloak.

Cicely made the necessary request of old Robert, that he would let her mother ride behind him so far as London, which was granted; and in due time Eustace was seated astride, behind the archer—yes, in spite of his feminine character, custom so far befriended him; and, with loose hose, and tunic open from the middle downwards, and flowing on each side, as did the cloak, the seeming franklin's wife rode from the castle gate.

When they had rode a short distance from the castle, Eustace became eager to get rid of his disguise and his companions, and bethought him how he could most readily accomplish the latter. He was strongly tempted to slip off by the horse's tail, and plunge into the thickets through which the wild path winded; but although he doubted not he should get clear off,

the circumstance might excite so much suspicion, that it would probably induce some of the party to return, and give the alarm, under the notion that either a spy, or a prisoner in disguise, had escaped from the castle, which leading the suspicious earl to make close inquiries, might be the means of increasing the difficulties in the way of his again obtaining ingress. Under this consideration, he thought it best to get off openly, and consistently with his assumed character.

“ My Cicely has a brave place of it, master Robert,” said the incognito.

“ Ay, has she,” said Robert.

“ The lady is right generous, and gives her such grand clothes.”

“ Ay, ay, good wife, but fine clothes turn light heads ; half the queans in that great sink we are wending to, have been led to that pass from wearing cast-off silks.”

“ It is awful to think, good man, how them unfortunate, worthless hussies, sail through the streets, with never a coverchief

chief on their heads—nothing but a silk net, so that all the world may see their fine curls and jewelry. Oh Lord! oh Lord! I pray to the Virgin my Cicely may never come to that pass! Have you got the bundle safely tied before the pommel of the saddle, good man?”

“What bundle, good wife?” said the archer.

“Why the bundle with the yellow silk tunic, and the robe of samite, brodered with gold, that Cicely told me you were to secure afore you.”

“She neither told me any such thing, nor did I ever set eyes on the bundle.”

“And have not you got it?” exclaimed the incognito, in a voice of alarm.

“Don’t I tell thee, I know nought about it!”

“Then turn thy nag’s head, and gallop back as hard as thou canst; why, man, it is with them I be going to London. Turn thy nag—turn thy nag, I say! Oh, save

us!—what a passion the lady will be in if she finds I have forgotten her body tire!”

“ I care not for her passion, good wife, but I do for my lord’s anger; I durst sooner ride to the devil than back to the castle, unless it were to give notice of an enemy being in sight.”

“ Oh Lord! oh Lord! what shall I do? I am quite distraught,” cried the incognito; “ let me down, let me down—I must back to the castle, and get to London with the rear guard.”

“ What must be, must be,” said old Robert, with the utmost composure; and stopping his horse, the good wife slipped to the ground.

“ That forgetful, flaunting hussey!” muttered the incognito, “ to give me all this trouble and vexation!”

“ I am sorry for thee, good wife,” said the archer, pricking on his horse, that he might overtake his comrades.

“ Many thanks, honest man!” said the incognito; and when the archers disappeared

peared in the windings of the road, he plunged into the neighbouring thickets, and made the best of his way to the hovel, where Langley awaited him. Having rid himself of his disguise, he set out with all speed for London.

CHAPTER IV.
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SHOULD he be so fortunate as to rescue Adeline from her present confinement, Eustace was well aware that a most difficult task remained, that of placing her beyond lord Leicester's reach. The earl's legal power over her, as his ward, was such, that no one would openly dare to withhold her from him. The castle of the powerful baron would be exposed to the attack of a man, who wielded in the sovereign's name the strength of the kingdom; nor would a convent be a more secure asylum, since he who had dared to attack and set fire to the priory of Saint Pancras, when the king was there lodged, would not hesitate to force his ward from the sanctuary of the altar. But although a powerful baron might not choose to bring

bring

bring down on himself the vengeance of the sovereign power, in a cause which, however humane, he was not sanctioned in by any legal title, yet such was the retired state in which the great nobles dwelt, so carefully guarded were their castles, and so despotic their authority within their own domains, that they could always afford a temporary asylum to those who should claim it. Eustace therefore thought that to obtain such an one, in the first instance, was his duty, and that if it could be so managed as not to reach the ears of him who had spies in every castle, what had commenced as a temporary abode, might happily be continued, until some fortunate turn in the political hemisphere might deprive Montfort of his power.

Adeline had named the earl of Gloucester, although she feared his rashness. Eustace thought there could not be a safer asylum than the castle of that powerful earl; but to avoid all hazard to Ade-

line's safety, which might be endangered by the fiery baron declaring himself her champion, and in the very summer of his wrath against the Montforts, for their recent insults and supposed injuries, make her the subject of accusation against Leicester, and not hesitate to refuse her guardian's demands of the surrender of her person, although backed by an armed force beleaguering his castle, Eustace determined on soliciting of the lady Agnes the secret reception of her friend. With this view he set out for Tunbridge Castle.

When he arrived at this chief seat of the noble house of Clare, he observed a general activity and preparation for defence, which indicated that however the king's mandate might be obeyed, of not appearing abroad with arms, the earl lacked not a numerous body of well-armed vassals within his extensive castle. Eustace inquired for lord Thomas de Clare, and was conducted to the tilt-yard, where he found him exercising with some young gentlemen,



gentlemen, whose families were feudatories of the earl's.

“Ha! Eustace Fitz-Richard!—welcome, thrice welcome to Tunbridge Castle!” exclaimed the young nobleman, springing from his horse, and grasping the hands of Eustace.—“Gentlemen, I pray you assist me in welcoming him who drove his lance right through the ermined lion, hauberk and all. Certes, my gallants, had you seen him drop his battleaxe, and, with no other arms than his iron gauntlet, spring on Richard of Cornwall, and bear him to the earth, you would say your prayers before you wrestled with him.—Once more, brave Eustace, welcome!”

Eustace was received with frank courtesy.—“Thou hast accomplished thy vow!” resumed Clare, “and like a gallant spirit, art come to prepare thee, under our chevrons, for another battle field.”

“My vow is not performed,” said Eustace; “nor can I, until it is, embark in any other purpose, however glorious.”

“ Spoken like one who will do honour to the spurs he so well merited in the fight at Lewes,” said lord Thomas.

“ I have come hither to crave a boon,” said Eustace.

“ It is granted before it is asked ; I answer for my brother as well as for myself : but let us enter the castle—it is high noon—the sewer hath served up dinner.”

They entered the great hall, where the earl and countess, the lady Agnes and other ladies, were already assembled, together with numerous gentlemen and others, who had their places at the table, which extended the whole length of the spacious room. Gloucester recognised Eustace with a gracious smile ; and the latter, from his seat, next to lord Thomas, received a bow and smile from Agnes.

When the repast was ended, and the countess, with her train, had retired, Eustace said apart to lord Thomas, that it was of his sister, the lady Agnes, he had a boon to ask, and solicited that he might  
be

be admitted to a short conference with her. The latter offered to be his conductor to her presence, and they immediately quitted the hall.

“Here is a faithful squire,” said lord Thomas, as they entered a chamber in which Agnes was seated with some young gentlewomen, her attendants, “who has come to crave a boon; bethink thee, Agnes, he saved thy life or liberty, and won a king’s bracelet in thy honour at the bloody field of Lewes.”

“Do you remind me of my obligations and my squire’s gallantry,” said Agnes, “thinking they had escaped my memory? Men may be ungrateful, Thomas, women never are—to the young and handsome,” she added, apart to a lady who sat near her.—“Accept my thanks for the bracelet you sent me; I possess not a jewel I more highly prize than I do it; the countess is quite jealous of my having such a trophy of her uncle’s being made captive.”

“I regret to have in any way given  
cause

cause of umbrage to the countess," said Eustace.

"How! when it pleases me?" said Agnes, quickly.

"Not so, but as a lady who feels for the misfortunes of her kinsmen," said Eustace.

"Oh, that is all right, and we shall soon set all these matters square," said Agnes: "I hope you are no longer one of Montfort's party?"

"I am not at present of any political one," he replied, "being under the observance of a private vow."

"A vow! and pray, sir squire, to whom has the vow been made?" said Agnes, with a look somewhat piqued.

"To the ever blessed Virgin," answered Eustace.

"Pshaw! I meant on whose account—its object?"

"It is the cause of the boon I now entreat that you will grant," and he bent one knee to the fair Agnes; "I solicit at your  
hands

hands a secret asylum for a persecuted lady: she knows not of my making this request, or she would probably have permitted me to mention her name; but such are the peculiarities of her situation, that I am forced to act of my own discretion, and risk a cold compliance with my lowly prayer, when her request would have doubtless met with an honoured reception."

"Your prayer is granted, and whether your supposition in her favour be correct or no," said Agnes, "be assured she shall have an honoured welcome, and all courteous hospitality, and such privacy as she shall demand. But certes, squire Eustace, it is a strange licence you have taken, to become the champion and protector of other ladies, when I had made you my own particular servant."

"Such, lady, I will cheerfully be, both in peace and in war, when once this fair maiden is free from danger."

"Ha! fair maiden—methought she had  
been

been some desolate widow, or wife escaped from a tyrannous husband," said Agnes: "sir squire, you cannot be the faithful servant of two kings—much less of two females."

"Try me, noble lady, and you will discover me to be sufficiently disinterested to be the latter."

"Disinterested! it is the most treacherous mask under which a man ever offered fair lady service," said Agnes. "A disinterested man making a vow to the Virgin, in behalf of a fair maiden! truly, my squire, you either wish to deceive me, or deceive yourself most wofully."

Eustace felt the force of the observation, and unwittingly sighed.

"Now, by my fathers! it is time for me to recollect myself, when a man on his knees to me forgets he has a tongue, and sighs for another," said Agnes, with her wonted impetuosity; but she the next moment really recollected herself, and added—"Arise, brave Eustace, and be assured that

that when the lady seeks shelter here, it shall be afforded her as becomes a Clare."

Eustace had considered it expedient not to name the lady for whom he solicited an asylum, from various reasons. Agnes was as volatile and as rash as her brothers, and might have insisted on a body of her family's vassals marching to the rescue of her friend—a measure which could not take place without immediately reaching the ears of the vigilant Leicester, and thereby ensuring its being frustrated. It was also desirable, that when actually in the castle, Adeline should be kept, if possible, unknown by name to the gentlewomen and domestics who attended on the countess and lady Agnes, as well as all its other inmates. To secure this, as far as possible, and also to prevent his present intention of rescuing her from transpiring, demanded that he should not unnecessarily speak of her. He therefore took his leave of the lady Agnes, and afterwards parted at the outer barrier from  
lord

lord Thomas, as a man who was serving under a vow, to question whom further than he was pleased to discover, would have been highly discourteous.

In the course of three or four days, his plans being fully matured, he set out for the scene of Adeline's captivity. It was a dark, moonless night, and the huge clouds, which slowly sailed along, shut out even the twinkling stars. When he had ascended one-third of the wooded hill, a shrill whistle made him check the steed he rode.—“Hollo! Will Leap-the-dyke, art thou here?” he said.

“At your worship's commands,” said Langley, springing into the path; “and blithely do I answer to my old name; it suits me best when employed on a gallant service.”

“Are all thy mates at hand?” said Eustace.

“My men, not mates, so please you,” said Langley; “the rogues had not such good pay when they served kings and barons.”



barons. Come this way, sir, and you shall see how sumptuously they are faring on a wild boar and a fat buck we killed since sunrise; and as to wine, gramercy! but I brought a butt from the city of as strong Rhenish as ever made a man think a green wood bower better than a castle hall, with nothing but home-fed pork and metheglin for his fare."

"But recollect thee, Will, thou must not be too bounteous of the wine," said Eustace; "thy men must act now, and feast afterwards."

"Trust me I know my duty. I have a brace of trusty crossbows for Jack Spiggot's body guard—my troops marched, passed, and saluted him with all honours, and in requital he drew off five gallons for every score of men."

"How many hast thou?" asked Eustace.

"A score of longbows, half as many with cross ones, two dozen lusty fellows in tunicles and steel caps, and armed with spears,

spears, axes, swords, and mallets; the rest, making four score complete, carry the raft and ladders, and are ready to turn their hands to any thing."

"The horse litter?"

"Ay, sir, with as pretty a yoke of gentle-going hackneys as ever carried a bishop from a feast—and the cushions, why he might sleep on them until translated to heaven."

"Now recollect my orders," said Eustace. "When you see a light on the southeast turret, you are to attack the great gate of the castle; but on no account are you to attack, or make any noise, in any other quarter whatever. You must have a party with the raft and ladders on the north side, who are to be as silent as the grave. When you there hear a low whistle from the castle walls, push over the raft, and be ready to obey my orders. If we succeed in carrying off the lady on that side, the attack may be continued on the south until near daybreak, to cover our flight; but  
should

should I not be able to get the lady out of the castle keep, and so to the outer wall, a party of you must get in by the raft and ladders, and we will then attack the gate on the inside, and, after we have forced it, storm the keep. Do you perfectly understand these orders?"

"Perfectly, sir; have you any further commands?"

"Yes. It may happen that I shall fall, and yet the lady have been carried off from the castle; if so, bear her, with all secrecy and expedition, to Tunbridge Castle, and there present this letter to the lady Agnes de Clare, with my respectful devoirs; and this letter you must give to the rescued lady." He gave the two packets, bound in scarfs of white silk, and then added—"Should I however fall, and the lady not be rescued, hasten with all speed with the letters to the lady Agnes de Clare. To her I bequeath the duty I shall have failed to achieve."

"Your orders shall be obeyed; but  
plague

plague on these letters ! I hope I shall not have to deliver them. Will you not come and see in what right martial array I have my men, in the deep hollow they call the Wild Sow's Litter House?"

"Thou hast an ill memory, Leap-the-dyke I fear thou wilt neglect my orders. Why, man, don't you recollect I am neither to be known by name or feature to thy wild fellows?"

"Not so, your worship; but you could look down on them from behind the old gnarled oak, whose naked roots o'er-canopy the fire at which their feast was roasted; there they sit, as happy as kings, and ready to fight to the death for their generous employer."

"I shall be better pleased to see them escorting the lady from these savage wilds," said Eustace. "But away—keep your men in readiness, and have a trusty scout watching for the beacon from the south-east turret."

Eustace proceeded to the castle. He  
had

had provided himself with another harp, in lieu of the one he had left when he rode off in the garb of a franklin's wife; and he now, seating himself opposite the gate, played the same air to which he had sang of the fight of Lewes.

"Art thou there, sir minstrel?" said a voice from the warder's tower. "By our Lady, there has been much talk of thee! so much, in troth, that the holy confessor wants to hear thee play: thou wilt be a rare hand at the gut-strings if thou makest the friar smile. Give God thanks for thy good fortune—the bridge shall be drawn in the twanging of a crossbow."

Eustace liked not to hear of the confessor's having come to the knowledge of his admission to the castle, nor his desire to see him: but let the danger be what it might, he was not going to shrink from it; he therefore boldly crossed the drawbridge.

When admitted into the gateway tower, he observed there was a considerable stronger guard than prior to the earl's visit,  
and

and that the men appeared more on the alert. He was not however left long to make observations, for one of the archers desiring him to follow, led the way to the castle keep. By a winding stair they ascended the western tower; and the archer having knocked gently at a door, a voice was heard, desiring the person to enter. On their doing so, Eustace found himself in a small room, fitted up as a monastic cell, lit by a lamp, which stood on a table, at which the confessor was seated, with a large, closely-written volume before him.

“Reverend father,” said the archer, “the minstrel has at length arrived, and I have brought him hither according to your orders.”

“Descend to the foot of the stairs, and there keep watch until I call thee,” said the friar. The archer retired, and the monk, who had had his eyes steadily fixed on Eustace from the moment he had entered the cell, remained some moments silent.—“This is thy third visit to the  
castle

castle, my friend," the friar at length said, with a manner which was meant to indicate indifference. Eustace inclined his head in assent. The friar resumed—"Thy last departure was so abrupt, that I had not an opportunity of speaking to thee. Hast thou executed the commission with which the lady Gertrude intrusted thee?"

However carelessly this was spoken, it was a question truly alarming to Eustace. Had the lady in some capricious mood acquainted the friar of her having employed him to procure poison?—did the friar believe that he had undertaken to send him a jar of poisoned grapes?—or if the lady had not betrayed him, had the friar had the means of overhearing their conversation? Be it by whatever means, the friar seemed to possess a knowledge in the highest degree perilous to Eustace. He was however too conscious of the integrity of his own intentions to feel either abashed or dismayed on his own account, however much he might be alarmed for Adeline.—

“I have partly executed that for which I went hence,” he said, in reply to the friar’s question.

“Only in part,” said the friar; “true—it has not yet arrived. Well, tell me what said the Jewish sorcerer El Mahoun?”

“I was not commissioned by you, sir friar,” said Eustace, “with any affair to that learned person.”

“But thou wast by my sister in the spirit, the lady Gertrude,” said the friar.—“The secrets of her heart are open to me, and it is meet that I should become acquainted with whatever concerns her.”

“Doubtless, sir, your situation of confessor to the lady qualifies you to unlock her bosom, but the same privilege does not extend to the opening of mine.”

“I am certainly not thy confessor,” said the friar, calmly, “but I am nevertheless the governor of this castle. You may possibly think such trust incompatible with my holy calling, yet it is the fact, and being so, I repeat my request that you propound



pound what hath passed between you and Aben el Mahoun."

"Neither as a governor any more than as a priest, do I acknowledge your right to make this requisition," said Eustace.

"As a priest," said the friar, "I might denounce future punishment for thy contumacy; but as a governor, vested with extraordinary powers by the king, I can be more speedy in my displeasure. Think well, sir minstrel, lest you provoke the torture."

"In what have I offended?" said Eustace.

The friar's countenance lost its mild character, the blood gathered into the centre of his forehead, and his eyes blazed fiercely.—"Wast thou not to have sent me a jar of grapes, prepared by El Mahoun?—Ha!"

"Have they come?" said Eustace, with a serene look.

"No; or by the ever blessed cross,  
G 2 thou

thou and the fiend Gertrude should this night sup on them!"

"And when they do arrive by my orders or means," said Eustace, "I will eat of them cheerfully."

"How? Do you mean to say they are not to come?"

"If I were to say so, you would scarcely believe the word of him you look on as your intended murderer."

The friar remained some moments silent, looking earnestly at him.—"What object hast thou in deceiving the lady Gertrude?"

"I have not said I deceived her."

"Then the poisoned jar will come?" said the friar.

"You draw your own inferences," said Eustace; "but once for all, I disclaim your right to interrogate me."

"Foolish youth—power is superior to right," said the friar; "but in exercising my power of hanging thee, as an undertaker to poison, I shall do rightly."

"Prove that I have undertaken to do  
this

this deed, and I am content to die," said Eustace.

"Mine own ears bear testimony against thee," said the friar.

"But against thy present conviction," said Eustace.

The monk again remained some moments in thought. — "This revives my question—what mean you by deceiving the lady Gertrude?"

"I do not hold myself obliged to answer you," said Eustace firmly.

"Ha! I had forgotten—hast thou the ivory box?"

Eustace drew it from his bosom.

"Does it contain the drug?" the friar eagerly asked.

"It does," said Eustace.

"Now then I will prove thee," said the friar, rising and filling a crystal goblet with clear water from an earthen jar. "Put one half the contents of that box in this water, and swallow it."

G 3 "To

“To induce me to do this, what alternative do you offer me?” said Eustace.

“If thou doest it, I will believe thee innocent of any murderous intent,” said the friar, “and allow thee to see the lady Gertrude.”

Eustace unscrewed the lid of the box, and approached the table; he poured in about one half of the greyish powder it contained, and stirring it, so that the water became quite clouded, he raised the goblet to his lips, and drank off its contents.

The friar watched his unvarying countenance.—“I am satisfied,” he said, “on that head, but not as to what is thy purpose in coming hither: however, thou mayest remain; my eye is on thee; thou shalt in a little space see the lady Gertrude.” The friar retired through a door in another part of the chamber from that at which Eustace had entered.

When left to his own meditations, Eustace dreaded that his hope of rescuing  
Adeline

Adeline would be frustrated by the vigilance of the friar, since he did not think the force he had sufficient to take the castle by storm; yet he was determined on persevering, and now directed his attention to the conveying a billet he had written to Adeline, acquainting her of what he had done, and the steps necessary to be taken by her to facilitate her escape. He hoped, that when he should be permitted to visit the lady Gertrude, he might have an opportunity of giving the billet to Cicely.

While he was thus occupied in thought, the door by which the friar had retired gently opened, and Cicely entered on tip-toe, holding a finger to her lips. She glided up to him, and whispered—"The confessor is with the lady Gertrude, and the lady Adeline is dying with fright, since I told her you had been taken before the friar."

"Hasten to her with this billet," said Eustace, in the same under tone, "and  
G 4 obey

obey lady Adeline's directions; and should you find that I am in confinement, I trust to you, my good Cicely, contriving to set me free: here is a wedding dower for thee, my pretty maiden," and he put a heavy purse of gold in her hand.

"Ay, that I will," said the damsel, courtesying, "though I should have to kill the friar, and to kiss Hubert for helping me." She then hastily retired by the door at which she had entered.

More than an hour had elapsed before the friar returned. Eustace thought that he eyed him with renewed suspicion, and more keenly scrutinized his face and figure. The incongruity of his hands and face, which Cicely had formerly detected, Eustace had now guarded against, by staining his hands with the same dark dye with which he had coloured his face and neck; and although he had himself seen the friar at his father's house, he did not think that he had been sufficiently noticed by him to be recognised through his present

sent disguise. The friar not having mentioned Adeline, also afforded him a strong hope that he did not suspect that she was the real object on whose account he had come to the castle; yet he could not disguise from himself, that to a man of the confessor's penetration it must appear very suspicious, that one, who seemed to be acting only as the lady Gertrude's agent, should be actually counteracting her intentions, since, if he did not choose to be her instrument, he need never have returned to the castle.

To assume a disguise, and act disingenuously, even when the object is good, must always be embarrassing to a noble mind, and can alone be honestly done where it is the only feasible means by which the treacherous and aggressive designs of others can be counteracted. Eustace considered, what was felt by the nation, that Simon Montfort had obtained, under the mask of a redresser of public grievances, the whole authority of the

realm into his hands, and was abusing his power with a tyranny which was felt in every house in the kingdom. In the particular instance of his ward Adeline, he had abused his power, by affiancing her to a man to whom he had given her lands; and not content with this, he had insulted her with a proposition, the nature of which it was not difficult for Eustace to surmise, from the jealousy of the lady Gertrude. If then the conduct of Montfort sanctioned Adeline's endeavouring to escape from his power with the loss of her property, the design on her life entertained by the lady Gertrude rendered her flight still more imperative; and as this could not be carried into execution without the aid of others, Eustace felt that he was fully justified in assuming a disguise, and obtaining her delivery, either by stratagem or force.

Wishing to avoid the appearance of embarrassment, which the friar's silent scrutiny could not altogether fail of exciting, Eustace ran over the chords of his harp,



harp, and, unbidden, sang. The friar did not interrupt him, but said, when he had ended—"Is thy minstrelsy profitable to thee? or rather I should ask, is it a good mask to thy profitable trade of cozening?"

"Why judge you so harshly, reverend father," said Eustace, "as to suppose that I live not by my profession of a minstrel?"

"Because thou dabblest in matters which belong not to thy art," said the friar.

"Pardon me, reverend father, for the comparison," said Eustace; "but it is not so inconsistent a minstrel's carrying a fair lady's message, as for a reverend priest to take upon himself the government of a baronial castle."

"But thou wilt find, sir malapert," said the friar, "that although your management may be slight, mine will prove me as fitted for the safe keeping of a stone house, as of a golden pix."

"I mean not to vaunt my foolishness over the wisdom of him who shattered the councils of princes in the priory of

Lewes," said Eustace ; and striking the strings of his harp, he sang some stanzas descriptive of the effects the friar's threats of Montfort's putting the captive barons to death had on the king and his nobles.

This was a species of flattery to which the friar was as accessible as any warrior who heard his feats in the battle field chanted in the festal hall. His eyes sparkled, and he waved his hand with all the exultation of one who gloried in hearing sung the magical effect of his brief oration.

From the situation in which Eustace sat, he observed the door behind the friar slowly open, and Cicely's head protruded for a moment, and also her hand, with which she waved a white kerchief; then instantly withdrawing, the door was closed. He thought he comprehended the signal, and that it was meant to intimate that the signal which he had requested in his billet to Adeline might be made from the south-east turret had been exhibited. The moment

ment of action was now fast approaching, and he had yet to secure the means of egress from the keep. He had noticed that the friar, on his return, had two large keys at his girdle, which he had not when he first saw him; these were doubtless the keys of the principal entrance, as well as of the small postern, and he therefore concluded that the friar had locked the doors for the night, but that he had left the keys of the drawbridge and gateway-tower with the warder: probably the friar had even made the archer who had conducted Eustace to him retire from the keep, and that there were no other men in this main body of the castle than themselves.

Eustace again struck the harp; he played a well-known heroic air, but he did not sing; he was debating how he should deal with the friar. To do aught against his life was utterly from his thoughts, but to obtain the keys, and prevent his giving the alarm, was indispensably necessary. While he was yet debating the means, an indistinct

indistinct noise was heard from without; Eustace more strongly struck the chords.

“Peace!” said the friar, and listened.

Eustace ceased to play—wild shouts and a great tumult were heard; the friar strode to the narrow casement, deeply embedded in the thick wall—the shouts increased, and were more decisive in their character. The friar turned from the window, his face flushed with rage; he plucked a poniard from beneath his gown, and rushing on Eustace, exclaimed—“Die, traitor! die!”

Eustace had sprang on his feet, and wielding his harp, struck the poniard and arm of the priest aside, and closing on him, threw him to the ground, and planting his right knee on his breast, he held his own dagger to his throat.—“Thou hast solved my doubts,” he said.

“Mercy! mercy!” cried the priest.

“None, if thou darest to utter the slightest sound,” said Eustace. He then hastily untied the friar’s girdle, and rolling  
ing

ing him over, tied his arms behind him immediately above the elbows. This was no sooner accomplished, than he dragged him to the further end of the room, and throwing him on his bed, tied him down on it.

“What mean you?” began the friar.

“One word, and you die!” said Eustace, passing the dagger before his eyes.

The keys had fallen to the ground when he had unloosened the girdle; he now seized them, and passed through the door at which he had seen Cicely. He found himself in a narrow passage, and at the further end he thought he saw a human figure; he rushed on—it was Cicely.—“Where—where is the lady Adeline?”

“This way—this way! but Lord, sir, if you don’t want to carry off the lady Gertrude, speak lower,” said the damsel; “don’t you hear her in that room? I have turned the key in the door, and she is raving to get out, or to be told what all this turmoil is about.”

“Let

"Let her rave on! lead me to the lady Adeline." In a few moments he beheld her. She was pale from terror, but gave him her hand, and smiled. He knelt, and kissed it.—"Now, Cicely, lead the way to the small postern."

They had to cross the hall, and here heard a thundering at the great door. Eustace instructed Cicely, who stepping up, inquired what the uproar meant.

"The castle gate is attacked," said a voice from without—"the banks of the fosse is thronged with a thousand men—tell our friar governor to come—the quarrells fly so thick, we cannot keep the walls!"

"The friar is praying for us all," said the damsel.

"D——! the Lord forgive me! we want some one to command us; they will take the castle, and the earl will hang every man of us!—but to think of his leaving a priest for governor."

"Get thee back," said Cicely, "and keep

keep the outer gate as long as you can—depend on it no one can get in here.”

Cicely now led the way by a long, narrow vaulted passage, which passed immediately under the various buildings in which the garrison were lodged. This avenue was terminated by a small postern door, which opened in an unfrequented spot on the northern side of the castle, at a short distance from the outer walls. The tumult on the southern side, particularly in the direction of the gateway tower, was here mixed with the nearer cries of the women and children, who had been awakened by the shouts of the assailants, and uttered screams of terror without comprehending the extent of the danger.

The extreme darkness of the night was favourable to the ascending the wall, without being observed by any of the females who were heard clamouring near the buildings, and who might have given the alarm to the soldiers, who appeared to have been all drawn to the southern front.

Eustace

Eustace looked over an embrasure, and thought he saw some objects moving on the opposite side of the fosse: he gave the preconcerted signal, which was immediately answered, and in a few moments he thought he distinguished a dark object moving on the water. It approached, and he now more distinctly saw that it was a raft, with several men. A ladder was fixed against the wall, and in a moment it was mounted by a man.

“Will Leap-the-dyke?” said Eustace.

“The same,” replied Langley. “Shall the men come up and attack these Leicester rascals in their den?”

“No, no. Is the ladder firm?”

“It swings a little; but there are only twenty rundles: you can be down in a second,” said Langley.

“Do you hold it firmly here, while we descend.—Ho! below there! keep the ladder and raft steady.” So saying, Eustace whispered an adjuration to Adeline to be resolute, and having lifted her on to the embrasure,



embrasure, placed himself on the ladder ; but as he held her hand, as she stooped to place her feet on the ladder, he felt, from the violent tremour which shook her, the terror she experienced. He implored of her to trust herself entirely to him : he grasped the ladder with his left hand, and caught her round the waist with his right arm. The heaving of the raft on the water, occasioned by the unsteady and unequalized weights which pressed on it, made the ladder, in spite of all the efforts of Langley and the men beneath, swing so violently, that Eustace became dizzy, and almost without knowing how he had accomplished it, he stood on the float, then sank on his knees, with Adeline swooning in his arms. Langley descended, and the raft was pushed off. Cicely, still leaning over the battlements, uttered a faint cry, and some words, which were drowned by the splashing of the water. The raft arrived at the opposite shore, and when they had gained the bank, Adeline

was

was placed in the litter, and Eustace mounted his horse. He now gave his instructions to Langley, who was to resume his post with the party who were occupying the attention of the garrison. They were to continue to do so, and prevent any pursuit, should Adeline's flight be discovered. But half-an-hour before dawn Langley was to dismiss his men, and then hasten to join him at Tunbridge Castle.

Eustace guided the litter to a farmhouse, which was situated at the western base of the hill, about a mile and a half from the castle. Here he had left four serving-men, who were wholly ignorant of the enterprise in which he was engaged: they were ready to spring into the saddle, and in a few moments he again set out. He believed himself free from all risk of pursuit; but not so from interruption in his progress. The country was in a most extraordinary and distracted state: the government had forbidden, under severe penalties, any one travelling with  
arms.

arms. The natural consequence was, that all the turbulent and lawless spirits made it their jubilee, and fearlessly attacked the traveller who conformed to the letter of the royal mandate. Against such marauders Eustace had not hesitated to have his men well armed, although their weapons were concealed by their long travelling-cloaks. But there was a class of freebooters more formidable than these houseless marauders: these were the partisans of Leicester, to whom the royal licence had been granted of carrying arms, many of whom availed themselves of the opportunity to be avenged on their personal enemies; and some even of elevated rank condescended to enrich themselves with the plunder obtained by their followers. In such a state of society, a journey of thirty or forty miles, with a lady in a litter, was a service of anxiety and danger. Eustace was keenly alive to his responsibility, since he might plunge Adeline into a situation of as great peril as that  
from

from which he had so happily rescued her.

They journeyed rapidly, and had crossed the Thames at a ferry, three or four miles above London, before break of day, and then pushing through Surrey, entered on an extensive heath in Kent. The sun shone brightly in a cloudless sky, and chased away apprehensions of danger as the mists from the moorlands. The wide plain was varied with some clumps of trees, and bounded by gently-swelling hills. Eustace rode at the side of the litter; but he had not entered further into conversation than to make some occasional inquiries after Adeline's health and comfort. To these Adeline had answered with a tone and manner which strongly expressed the grateful feelings she entertained for Eustace's services. But so strictly did he guard himself, that although he could not be insensible to the flattering modulation of her voice, he rather shunned than courted a continuation of the intoxicating sounds. They had passed the heath, and  
were

were entered on a more thickly-wooded tract of country, occasionally varied by richly-cultivated land, surrounding small hamlets. The forest-walks, which ramified in every direction, and bounded these fertile spots, gave a close and ever-varying aspect to the scene; but they also might cause alarm as the haunt of outlaws.

It was past noon, when their route lying through one of these forest tracks, the sound of horns and cry of dogs assailed their ears, and in a few moments a majestic hart bounded past them. Eustace immediately drew up, with his little band, under the cover of a large oak, and waited to let the hunters pass. The hounds came on in full cry, and sweeping down a long avenue, appeared a noble train of hunters, who scarcely threw a passing glance on the group beneath the oak tree. But Eustace had recognised the countess of Gloucester and lady Agnes de Clare, riding on white palfreys, at the head of  
the

the cavalcade; but he neither saw the earl nor lord Thomas.

Adeline was particularly desirous to see Agnes before she should be presented to her family, as it was necessary to her remaining concealed from lord Leicester, that she should pass under an assumed name. She therefore spoke with regret of her having passed them. Eustace observed, that from the appearance of the hart, the chase had only recently commenced, and that therefore there was little prospect of their having the fortune again to fall in with the hunters, and that it was therefore desirable they should pursue their journey to Tunbridge Castle.

They had journeyed upwards of an hour, when the horns were again heard.—“Ha!” said Eustace, “listen to the recheat—the noble stag has foiled his pursuers.”

“They cannot, by the horns, be far distant,” said Adeline: “I will remain here,  
and

and I pray you hasten and bring my friend Agnes to me."

Eustace for a moment hesitated; but thinking there could be no danger, he gave his men orders to guard the litter, and galloped in the direction from whence the winding of the horns had come. The distance however was greater than he had imagined, and he found himself involved in the intricacies of the forest, having, in following the sounds of the horns, branched off from the broad forest walk. He was on the point of giving up the pursuit, and returning to Adeline, that he might personally watch over her safety, when he again heard the horns, and apparently at no great distance. He dashed on, and caught glimpses, between the trees, of some of the hunters. When he came up with them, and inquired for the countess and lady Agnes, he was told they were some distance a-head. He pushed on, and at length overtook the chief company.

Lady Agnes was riding a little apart in

the broad path, skirted on each side with forest trees. Her white palfrey pranced, and arched his neck, and waved his long tail, with all the pride of a pampered favourite. The lady rode him with short stirrups; she wore Parisian boots, a novelty which the English ladies had not yet adopted, but which were almost concealed by her wide hose of green silk: her various tunics of different colours, the upper one of which was green, were open in front, from the middle downwards, and hung in waving folds on each side and behind, concealing all but the knee and lower part of the legs. On her head she wore a hood of pale yellow silk, fastened under her chin, and from underneath the hood a wimple of transparent white silk fell over her face. The housings of the palfrey were of scarlet silk, richly embroidered with gold, as were the trappings of his head and breast, and further decorated with small silver bells.

As Eustace approached, he perceived  
through



through her transparent veil a smile of recognition. He alighted, and she reined in her palfrey. The smile had disappeared, and there was an expression of sadness in her countenance. He tendered his inquiries after her health, to which she replied—"Oh, I am very well—excellently well—and amusing myself, as you see, apart from that noisy crew. My little Ganymede is excellent company; we converse by the hour—don't we, Gany?" and she leaned forward and patted the palfrey's neck.—"Well, sir squire, have you accomplished your vow?"

"I have been so fortunate," said Eustace, distressed at Agnes's altered manner, and somewhat piqued that she had not made any inquiries for the lady whom she had consented to shelter.

"Has it been a desperate affair?—any lives lost?" said Agnes.—"Will you look, sir squire, whether the curb don't chafe Ganymede's mouth?"

Eustace, with a heart which began to

swell with indignation, did as he was desired, and said—"The bit is sufficiently easy, madam, only you have made rather severe use of it."

"I have only used the curb within these five minutes," said the lady Agnes.—"Well, sir, and when am I to see this fair damsel of yours?"

"You do me an unmerited honour, in styling the lady mine," said Eustace; "but she in whom I have presumed to interest you is in the forest, within a few minutes ride."

"Oh, sir, I never questioned your modesty," said Agnes; then, with sudden vivacity, added—"Shew me the way—I will go and behold this errant lady."

Eustace comprehended not Agnes's manner; but he was convinced that when she should discover the lady to be Adeline, her coldness would at once disappear; he therefore gladly resumed his saddle, and pointing in the direction he had come, the lady gave her palfrey the reins,

reins, and she galloped on, attended by Eustace, and followed by three or four gentlemen.

They rode on some time in silence; at length Agnes, checking her palfrey into a gentle amble, said—"Do you recollect escorting me to Kingston Castle, sir squire?"

"There are few events in my life have made so strong an impression," he replied.

"How came you to embark in this lady's service?" said Agnes, after a moment's pause.

"From a belief that she required aid, and the hope that I could afford it," he replied.

"That is, from pure errantry—no mixture of hope that you might win her heart?" and Agnes looked for a moment in his countenance. The blood rushed into his face. Agnes again galloped on.

They reached the place where Adeline reclined in the litter. No sooner did Agnes behold her, than she pulled the

reins so quickly, that the palfrey reared, and Agnes gazed on Adeline for a moment in silence; in the next, they had both alighted, and were in each other's arms. After the first eager salutations and inquiries, they resumed their seats; and Eustace, riding before, left the two friends to themselves. Adeline fully explained her past and present situation, and the necessity which existed for her residence remaining unknown to the earl of Leicester. Agnes would have set his power at defiance; but in compliance with the entreaties of Adeline, she consented to adopt the more prudent plan, and induce her brothers and sister to receive her under an assumed name, although she well knew that Gloucester would have delighted in making her wrongs the subject of accusation against the earl.—“Not,” added Agnes, “that you need apprehend the loss of your lands; Gilbert has made, through Mortimer, his peace with king Henry; and no sooner shall the royal barons

rons again appear in the field, than Montfort's reign will end. But now, tell me honestly what you intend to make of yonder squire of yours?"

"Make of him! What mean you?" said Adeline.

"Pshaw!—how dull! Why, girl, is he to become baron of Melmonby, Holtbye, and all those other byes, rigs, and tons, down in the north country which own you as sovereign lady?"

"How can you be so silly!" said Adeline; "does it follow that I am to love, because I am grateful?"

"Certainly! Why else is it that I cannot forget he saved me from banditti?" said Agnes. "I have tried all I can to despise him, as heartily as ever I despised all those London traffickers; but it won't do—I think of when he sprang on the king of the Romans, and all his father's merchandize is forgotten."

"Will you read your recantation openly?" said Adeline; "shall Henry de Sand-

wich wed you, in Saint Paul's, to the son of that 'vile citizen, one master Fitz-Richard,' you flouted so at, when the queen sought sanctuary in the bishop's palace?"

"You are very uncharitable, Adeline," said Agnes, "to remind me of my imperinences; and yet my mind is not in the least altered on that head—I despise all those sort of people as cordially as ever—but him!—now tell me honestly, Adeline, don't you love him desperately?"

"Not desperately," said Adeline, smiling.

"I am glad of it," said Agnes; "and yet why need I? The thing is impossible: they would shut me up in a convent for life; and I could not endure to be a nun."

"But why cannot you laugh at him, as well as at all the rest of mankind?" said Adeline.

"Laugh at him! Why, I am ready to burst with vexation, when I see him  
as

as respectful and civil to me as though I were a grandmother," said Agnes.

"How would you have him behave?" said Adeline.

"Have I not made him my squire?" said Agnes—"have I not allowed him to wear my plume, and a ring from this very third finger of my left hand?—have I not on all occasions distinguished him? and yet he never seems to forget that I am a daughter of the late earl of Gloucester."

"Is that a fault in him, Agnes?"

"Yes; I have forgotten who his father is—cannot he forget who mine was?"

"Does he suspect that you have done the former?" said Adeline.

"I don't know; for we have never touched on any subject that in the slightest degree tended that way," said Agnes.

"Indeed, I never hear of merchants, or merchandize, without feeling as though I had the salt marsh ague. I wish he had

been a foundling—we might then have supposed him the son of a noble line.”

“ With a base one struck aslant his shield,” said Adeline, smiling.

“ Even so. Do you think it probable, Adeline?”

“ What, Agnes?”

“ Why, that his mother has been very handsome—has she not?”

“ She is so still,” said Adeline.

“ Why that, you know——” said Agnes, and stopped.

“ I am quite in the dark,” said Adeline.

“ How very dull you are !” said Agnes. “ Now only look at him ; did you ever see a finer back ? Look how gracefully—how majestically his neck and head rise from his shoulders ! Did you ever see a finer limb resting on a stirrup ? I won’t believe it—that citizen is not his father !”

“ You are mad. Would you rob him of that which he prides himself as much in as you do in the illustriousness of yours,  
the



the honour and virtue of his parents?" said Adeline.

"I may be mad, and I believe I am," said Agnes. "Gilbert says I shall have a royal prince for my husband, and here are my thoughts bent on a citizen's son!—Yonder are the grey towers of my ancestors. I wish I had been a franklin's daughter."

They arrived at the castle.

CHAPTER V.  
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IN Tunbridge Castle Adeline found a secure and pleasant abode; but she was not altogether free from alarm, since every one who arrived brought intelligence of fresh acts of tyranny and violence exercised by Montfort, who governed the kingdom with a rod of iron; and it was not improbable, should he discover her residence, but he would endeavour to have her once more in his power. On Alwyn's account, she was secretly and deeply afflicted. Within two days after the battle of Lewes, Montfort had caused him to be seized; but where he was confined had not transpired. It was known that prince Edward, and his cousin Henry D'Almaine, were closely confined in Dover Castle, and many of the most faithful of the king's followers

followers were incarcerated in different castles; but the particular prison of each did not always transpire.

At the earnest request of Thomas de Clare, Eustace occasionally came and passed a few days at the castle; but he seemed rather to shun than court the society of the ladies. Yet this was not to be avoided at all times, however much he trembled at the indulgence, since the ladies would accompany the gentlemen when they went out hawking, and would sit in the gallery of the tilt-yard while they exercised their skill in arms. Towards Adeline his deportment was ever guarded by the most studious care, and perhaps no one but she read the secret of his heart. With Agnes, on the contrary, he acted with unembarrassed ease, tempered with the respect due to her sex and rank; and being altogether insensible of her prepossession in his favour, he fanned the flame, by appearing in the unrestrained ingenuousness of his natural character.

Eustace

Eustace might consider himself happy in having commenced his career under such favourable circumstances. He had, at the outset, obtained the distinguished favour and countenance of the most illustrious family in the kingdom; and having the foundation of a splendid fortune, he might look forward to the attainment of distinguished rank, and becoming the progenitor of a noble family. But he was one of those men who, under a light and gay deportment, nourish the most ardent feelings, at the very time a strong conviction assures them that to do so must end in ultimate misery. He loved Adeline tenderly, deeply; and he had the mortification to think, that at the very commencement of his passion he had beheld a rival arise, who, almost without an effort, had obtained possession of her heart. To struggle with his feelings, to endeavour to forget her, he felt no disposition; he thought her superior to her whole sex, and was content to worship as a goddess,
her

her whom he despaired of winning as a woman. When, in a cooler moment, reason would whisper that it were better to flee into the darkness of the outer world, than flutter like the unfortunate moth around the flame which must ultimately destroy him, his heart, ever beguiling his judgment, would whisper that she was yet in danger, and that since he had been the means of her quitting the castle in which her false guardian had confined her, it was his duty not to relinquish watching over her, until she should be under the security of her own roof.

Whenever Adeline quitted the suit of apartments which were peculiarly appropriated to the lady Agnes, she wore a coverchief and a wimple of thick silk, which effectually concealed her face. This was an additional precaution to that of her assumed name of the lady Editha; and although both had been strongly objected to by the earl, as a tacit confession that the power of Montfort was dreaded
in

in the castle of Tunbridge, his consent had been obtained by her declaring that she would, on no consideration, involve him in a conflict with the ruler of the kingdom, and that the moment the surrender of her person should be demanded by lord Leicester, she would elsewhere seek a sanctuary.

Agnes and Adeline were leaning against the parapet, which defended the balcony to the window of a turret projecting from the western extremity of Agnes's apartments; it overlooked a large court, and various outward defences of the castle, and beyond was an extensive and richly-wooded country.

"Heigh ho! I have a great mind to throw myself over the parapet," said Agnes.

"You have become quite a different creature, Agnes; what makes you so melancholy?"

"Have I not more cause than you, who sigh by the hour?" said Agnes. "Your eagle,

eagle, it is true, is a captive, but he will regain his liberty, and carry you to his mountain nest; but my bird will never be an eagle—I wish he would prove himself even a musket hawk.”

“That you might be his sparrow, Agnes?”

“Ay, my Adeline; would he but fly away with me, I would in three months make him lord of half-a-dozen manors I shall then be mistress of by my father’s testament.”

“Are you serious, Agnes?”

“Never more so in my life. I have thought of family honour, until I have almost determined to found a monastery with my lands, and become its lady abbess. What think you, Adeline—should I make a very dignified mother in God? Pshaw! it wont do—the Clares were never intended for nuns.”

“Try the effect of absence. If your brothers don’t ask him so earnestly to
come

come to the castle, he is modest, and will stay away."

"Absence! do you find it so potent? modest! I could sometimes find in my heart to actually quarrel with him. Why there is not a gentleman who has been cubbed in some petty tower holden of our family, and who wears our livery, that would not strut and carry his head as proudly as that beautiful white peacock yonder, my Eustace sent me after winning my feather at the quintain match, and fancy his fortune made, did I smile on him; then should we hear him vapouring of his ancestor being a younger son of a Norman baron, and who had been a knight in the field at Hastings—I question whether any of them did more bravely there than my own squire did at Lewes—and though but a feudatory of our house, he was of a noble strain, and worthy to be raised to alliance with the Clares: oh, how I hate those small gentlemen, so full of pride and meanness!"

"How

“How have they provoked your present wrath, my Agnes?”

“Because it is those curs would yelp the loudest, did I follow my inclinations,” said Agnes: “my brothers would storm, but were they left to themselves, their rage would exhaust itself, and their love for me, and a strong sense of family honour, would make them exalt their brother-in-law; but these pests, who style themselves gentlemen, and yet wear our livery, are in the hall, the closet, the anti-room, and the bedchamber—in the mews, the dog kennel, and the stable—the tilt-yard, the field, and the forest—they are like the frogs the priest told us of the last Sunday, in the very kneading-trough, for one of them has the honour to be head baker!”

Adeline laughed at this sally.

“It may seem very mirthful to you,” said Agnes, half laughing, half crying, “but it is a very serious matter to me. For how could he or I have a fair chance
of

of Gilbert or Thomas becoming reconciled, when at every turn these malicious, envious wretches, would be piquing their pride? The master of the wardrobe would ask, should he order Flemish cloths from master Fitz-Richard—Gilbert would curse him, and not bear the sight of a new tunic for a twelvemonth: the butler would ask if he should order twenty hogsheads of wine from master Fitz-Richard: Gilbert would think his wine poison—in short, my dear Adeline, the state of things would be most terrible.”

“Then why make them such?” said Adeline.

Agnes looked her full in the face—“Have you the conscience to ask me that question?” she said—“you, who to avoid marrying a gallant knight you did not like, for the sake of one sir Alwyn Landless, for Fitz-John has all his baronies, gave up, without a sigh, your fine estate, and are content to pine in this stupid castle, under the
rank

rank and style of ‘ the veiled lady !’ for so our liveried gentlemen have named you.”

“ That is not altogether a true statement of the fact,” said Adeline : “ lord Leicester, without my consent, has affianced me to sir Adam Gordon, and as a pledge of his sincerity, has put him in present possession of my lands ; but my right to them is as good as ever, and I do not fear obtaining their restitution, when the time shall arrive of my having a right to their possession. As to what induced me to withdraw from the kind of captivity in which Leicester had placed me, it is a subject too hateful for me to think of, and to shun its repetition I would cheerfully become ‘ the veiled lady’ for life.”

“ Pardon me, my Adeline, I meant not to hurt your feelings : but who is this entering the court ? as I hope to be married, it is Emeric ! look how interestingly our Troubadour is halting on one leg, and leans and smiles so kindly on that beautiful page—see how my white peacock, who is so
strange

strange to every one, actually allows the boy to fondle him. That is not the same fair-haired youth Emeric used to have attending on him—where does that wretch of a poet pick up such beautiful boys?”

Adeline had wrapped the thick wimple over her face, and could only indistinctly see the Troubadour and his page as they stopped for a few moments while the boy caressed the peacock, and then crossed the court, followed by the bird, proudly spreading the snow-white plumage of his magnificent tail.

Adeline was veiled when Emeric was admitted into the apartment of Agnes, for Eustace had made no one in his father's house acquainted with his rescue of her, or her present situation. The Troubadour leant on the shoulder of his page, but his countenance indicated renovated health, although his limb was not yet so much recovered as to enable him altogether to dispense with support. Having paid his homage to Agnes, but not in his wonted strain of gallantry,

gallantry, he asked her had she any commands for France, whither he was hastening; but having been detained in the Thames by contrary winds, he had determined on crossing the country, and was on his way into Sussex with the intention of embarking from thence.

While Agnes replied to lord Emeric, Adeline, who, through the to others impenetrable screen of her silken wimple, could observe objects which were near, and on which the light strongly shone, had her attention deeply fixed on the youthful page. The countenance, in expression and in features, seemed perfectly familiar to her; and when she noticed the fixed attention with which he listened to what was said by Emeric to Agnes, and observed how the colour went and came in his lovely countenance, as he heard Emeric, in reply to an accusation of being an altered creature, declare that he never was more devotedly the slave of beauty than at the present moment, a
vague

vague suspicion fluttered in her breast, and made her heart sicken.

“But I thought thy love for Amarantha was like the flower never to fade,” said Agnes.

“Nor will it,” said Emeric—the page deeply blushed. “My Amarantha, of whom I so long sung, I still worship,”—the page turned pale and trembled—“in a different form; but there is still in this one the same unfading matchlessness of mind and feeling.”

“Oh, so you would say of every new love!” said Agnes; “your ravens are all swans.—That reminds me, sir page, of the remarkable condescension shewn you in the court by my proud white peacock—what charm carry you, sir page?”

The page blushed deeply, and cast down his eyes.

“You seem to have changed your page as well as your love,” said Agnes to Emeric, “and for one that blushes and cannot
speak—

“speak—what have you done with that mischievous boy?”

“Oh, sent him to a friend’s castle, to learn the use of arms,” said Emeric. “The fool fell in love with one to whom I sent him with a billet.”

The page blushed still more deeply.

“And you were jealous of your page!—oh fie, my lord!” said Agnes.

“Not at all; but it is so silly a thing a boy’s being in love, that I thought it best to send him to school,” said the Troubadour.

“Then I suspect you will soon have to send your present page,” said Agnes, “to keep him company.”

“The devil!—A thousand pardons, lady Agnes; but this unfortunate bone I broke in your service shoots at times pangs through my whole frame.”

“I am sorry for your sufferings,” said Agnes; “but I thought that the mischance had befallen you when you were attacked by banditti; but as to being in

my service, I declare, so far from it, you were inconveniencing me all the time, while you lay perdue beneath my litter, most abominably with your groans."

"Such are your thanks for my broken bone and wound in the lungs," said the Troubadour, smiling, and bowing, "while he who escaped unhurt is highly honoured."

"Does he say so?" said Agnes, quickly.

"Oh, not he. If he mentions you at all," said the Troubadour, "it is with the same kind of commendation he would bestow on a rare bird from the Indies."

"You are intolerably malicious," said Agnes.—"I wish, sir page, you would avenge me: make love to his new Amarantha, and do it more cunningly than your predecessor; if you break your master's heart, I will make your fortune."

The page smiled at first, so as to shew a set of beautiful white teeth; then looked up for a moment tenderly in his lord's face, and again his eyes were downwards cast.

Lord

Lord Emeric shortly afterwards retired.

“ There is some mystery about that page,” said Agnes. “ What think you of the beautiful boy ?” Adeline shook her head. “ Nay, now cease to be the veiled lady, and let me see your face and hear your voice.”

“ I have seen what I tremble to think is but too true,” said Adeline. “ If to interfere were not now too late, I would do it at all hazard of discovering myself; but it might be cruel, without being useful; and I would fain hope lord Emeric is really a man of honour.”

“ Nay, keep on thy veil, for thou art quite oracular,” said Agnes. “ But if you will speak, so as I can understand you, tell me what you have seen, or what it is you suspect ?”

“ Will you forgive my silence,” said Adeline, “ and contrive that I should have a private interview with this boy ?”

“ What, Adeline ! why the chit will not have mustaches these five years !”

“ Nonsense! manage the meeting, Agnes, and never mind should he lack a beard all the days of his life.”

At dinner the page stood behind lord Emeric. The curiosity of the Troubadour seemed strongly excited by the veiled lady, whose wimple was so disposed, that she could eat without more than the lower part of her face being seen ; but the respectful manner with which the earl and countess deported themselves towards her, prevented his hinting to lord Thomas, next whom he sat, his wish to penetrate a mystery, evidently sanctioned by the heads of the family.

CHAPTER VI.
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WHEN the ladies had retired, Agnes sent one of her pages to bring lord Emeric's to a particular room, without acquainting him by whose desire it had been done. No sooner was this accomplished, and the page left alone, than Adeline entered, and closing the door, saw that they were alone. The page stood respectfully with his eyes fixed on the ground. Adeline drew off her coverchief and wimple, and softly said—"Margaret."

The seeming page uttered a faint scream, looked wildly up in Adeline's face, then threw herself at her feet, and buried her face in her robe.

"My beloved Margaret!" uttered Adeline, raising her, folding her in her arms, and pressing her tenderly to her bosom—

“ my beloved Margaret, speak to your friend—your sister! unbosom yourself to me, my sweet girl, nor fear from me unkindness.”

“ Oh ! death rather than this !” cried the girl, sobbing. “ Oh, unkind winds, to expose me thus ! But I am not a guilty thing !—Oh no, lady Adeline—did you know the solemn vows he has made, you could not, dared not, disbelieve him.”

“ I am thinking only of you, my sweet Margaret, of your father, of your mother,” said Adeline, pressing her to her bosom.

“ And oh, how I think of them ! but —” and she looked up, and smiled through her tears—“ we are to return in the spring, and we are to kneel at their feet, and he is to beg of them to forgive his wife, and I am to supplicate that they will pardon my husband.”

“ God grant it may be so !” said Adeline, solemnly.

“ Oh, doubt it not ! I do not, cannot, will not !” said Margaret, vehemently.

“ Nor

“Nor will I, my kind Margaret. But why this disguise?”

‘Alas! we cannot sail against the wind,’ said my beloved lord; ‘but we can reach the destined point by another route.’ He said this when we left the ship; and he added—‘So it is with our main object, my love: I cannot lead thee to the altar now, for strong circumstances oppose it; but I will: we must then turn aside from the straight path for a short time; but if I do not lead thee into it again, call me false wretch—scoundrel! heap on me all and every term of obloquy thy mouth can frame; and worse than all—hate me!’ Would you have me doubt him, beloved, honoured lady?”

“I would not say I would; but——” Adeline paused.

“No hesitation—no doubts!” cried Margaret; “I have none—I will have none! I might doubt my Redeemer’s recorded promise; but could I doubt him whose eyes, tongue, soul, was all before me?—

Oh, no, no, no! I have a faith in him which nothing can shake—not even himself; for were he to prove false, I should not know it!” and she burst into tears on Adeline’s bosom.

At this moment a voice was heard, calling from the corridor—“Sir page! lord Emeric’s page! hasten to your lord!”

Margaret brushed away her tears; and Adeline, throwing her veil and wimple over her head and face, had just time to say—“Let me see you again,” before the door was opened; and as she retired through an opposite one, she heard the intruder say—“Hasten, sir page, to thy lord; he is raving at thy absence, as though thou hadst stolen his lute, and his purse, and his mistress into the bargain. But, mum! what have you to do whispering the veiled lady?” Adeline had closed the door as the last words were spoken.

Adeline hoped that when she should again see Margaret, she would be more calm, and might be persuaded to return
to

to her parents ; but in the course of the evening, these hopes were destroyed, by hearing that some two hours before, lord Emeric had abruptly set out on his journey into Sussex, attended by his page and followers, assigning as a reason for declining the hospitality of the earl of Gloucester, the urgency of some family affairs which required his immediate presence in Provence.

It was on the fourth day after this event, that as Agnes and Adeline were proceeding to the gallery of the tilt-yard, Eustace met them, having been two or three weeks absent from the castle : his appearance indicated that he had been long on the road, and his countenance was wan and dejected. Adeline could well surmise the cause ; but having from motives of delicacy not communicated to Agnes the history of the beautiful page, having, rather than do so, subjected herself to the raillery of her fair friend, she now earnestly desired to have a few moments private

conversation with him; and being unconscious of any impropriety, she eagerly expressed to Agnes her wish that she would proceed with her gentlewomen to the gallery, while she returned to the castle with Eustace.

The eyes of Agnes dilated, while the roses forsook her cheeks and lips; but drawing herself up, she bowed haughtily, and without uttering a word passed on. Adeline was vexed; she could not mistake the jealous suspicion which had shot through the brain of her friend; but she thought she could easily appease her, and dissipate her doubts; and therefore, addressing Eustace, requested he would accompany her into the castle.

They walked on in silence, and when they had entered Agnes's usual sitting-room, Adeline was some moments before she could break the subject.—“I think, my invaluable friend,” said she, at length, “I know the subject which at present afflicts you.”

“Alas!

“ Alas! I hope not,” said Eustace, mournfully; “ disgrace is doubly poignant, when it is known to those whom we honour.”

“ But in this instance, I trust, I believe,” said Adeline, “ that the cause of affliction is only temporary, and that you will find no disgrace has stung your excellent family.”

“ Ah, madam! you judge by your own purity,” said Eustace; “ and yet I believe there was not a purer soul on earth than hers, until that false, cold-blooded traitor was nurtured in our abused house.”

“ I will not attempt his exculpation; but Margaret, whom I have clasped in my arms, assured me——” said Adeline.

“ When?—where?—here?” exclaimed Eustace, vehemently—“ has she been here? Oh, tell me, adored Adeline! where she is, that I may fly to her rescue!”

Adeline appeared not to notice the unguarded expression his agitation had betrayed him into, and replied, that

four days preceding, Margaret had been a few hours at the castle.

"I traced them—I pursued them," said Eustace, "and found the ship they had quitted for the avowed purpose of crossing the land to Dover. I have been there—to Hythe—to Ramsgate—Margate, but in vain; I can discover no trace of them."

"Nor could you, by now doing so," said Adeline, "do any good. Margaret has gone with her own free will, in fullest confidence of lord Emeric's honour."

"His honour!" said Eustace, scornfully.

"And it would perhaps be better to trust to him," continued Adeline, "than by any violent measures on your part destroy poor Margaret's peace for ever."

"Oh, lady Adeline, you, who are all goodness, think others good. My own feelings have not been seared by either time or the world's malignity, but I know enough to suppose the kind of justice my poor sister has to expect from this proud lord.

lord. But it shall not be," he added ; " I will hunt him through the world, and he shall either do my sister justice, or my lance shall pierce his heart, or his mine ! he shall have no loophole through which to escape me. I have come hither to claim knighthood at the red earl's hands : once dubbed, I will follow the traitor to the end of the earth, and defy him to mortal combat before God and man."

Adeline thought it in vain to reason with him ; indeed she had nothing to offer in palliation of lord Emeric, and as she perceived that he considered his sister as a victim, and therefore entertained none other than kind, though melancholy feelings for her, she thought it best to desist, after making one request.—" Will my preserver oblige me in this?" she said. " Judge not hastily, neither go to extremities, without first speaking with your sister. Lord Emeric may intend to act rightly—he may do so : give him the opportunity. If he does not, I would com-
mit

mit the guidance of your mind to the inspirations of the Almighty."

"I am not going to be his assassin," said Eustace. "By my demanding a judicial combat, he will have ample opportunity of qualifying himself to be the champion of my sister, even before myself: let him do that, and Margaret's interest and happiness will make me embrace the man who has requited our hospitality, and our anxious care of him when he was on the bed of sickness, almost of death, by robbing us of the gem we loved so dearly. Oh, lady Adeline, could you read my heart—could you comprehend all I have suffered on this dear girl's account, and also on my own, you would pity me—you would perhaps honour me with a thought, when I am traversing a foreign land."

Adeline was greatly moved; she felt to what he alluded as the cause of his personal affliction; she felt all she owed him, and although she forced herself to restrain

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the words of kindness she would have uttered, she could not the tears which trembled in her eyes, and then rolled down her cheeks.

Eustace saw them—he understood them; he threw himself on one knee, and caught her hand.—“ Precious, precious tears!” he enthusiastically exclaimed; “ more valued by me, than supremest happiness by thousands who attain all for which they sigh! Oh, Adeline, affliction and those tears have wrung from me the secret I had resolved to carry to the grave. I love—I adore you! but think me not therefore presumptuous; you shall neither be persecuted nor offended by my passion: when I have discharged my duty to my family, and my small meed of service to yourself, I shall bid Europe an eternal farewell; but should I ever kneel amidst the conquerors of the Infidels, before the shrine of the holy sepulchre, my only earthly thoughts will be yours, my only

only earthly hope, that I retain a place in your remembrance.”

“ Generous, noble Eustace! would to Heaven that the disposer of hearts had allowed me to say more than that you will ever rank in my regard as the dearest of my friends!” Adeline’s voice was tremulous, and her countenance agitated as she spoke.

Eustace bent his face over the hand he still retained; a burning tear dropped on it; he sighed profoundly, and then said, endeavouring to calm his voice—“ My wishes are granted, and like all earthly ones, give birth to others; but no, I will still this tumult. Adeline, may you be happy! your being so will be happiness to me. Heaven for ever smile on you!—on—on those you love! Farewell!” He rose, gazed on her for a moment, and then rushed from the chamber.

Eustace was shortly afterwards closeted with the earl of Gloucester; and after he had withdrawn, the earl gave orders for the

the solemn investiture of a knight, and a grand feast on the following day, in honour of the event.

When Adeline and Agnes met, the former, fully sensible that the fact of Eustace's sister having fled with lord Emeric could no longer be concealed, explained the mystery of the page, and that it was on Margaret's account she had sought an interview with Eustace.

Agnes was satisfied, and although she repined at Eustace's intention of proceeding to France, she secretly rejoiced that, by his becoming a knight, he would enter the pale within which all, in a chivalrous sense, were equal. He would not be a step nearer to the qualification necessary in a suitor for her hand, but he could, without offence, wear her favours, and she might openly acknowledge him as her champion. Agnes therefore hailed the event as auspicious, without for a moment dwelling on the distressing circumstances

stances which had induced Eustace to seek the honour of knighthood.

Eustace was naturally pious, and he conformed to the ceremonials and dogmas of his religion with the feeling acquired by education and habit: but when he on this important night watched his arms, as they lay before the altar in the castle chapel, he gradually fell into a solemn communing with himself, touching his earthly and heavenly relations, which he had never before so gravely considered; he endeavoured to rid himself of the vanities which had in a thousand instances impelled him into situations and actions which, however venial they may be styled, will not bear the test of serious reflection; he acknowledged that he was as proud in spirit as those whom he had most condemned for pride, although his pride had not shewn itself in the way he condemned, perhaps because he was placed in a different situation, and under very different circumstances; he acknow-
ledged

ledged himself to be wrathful, and he earnestly prayed to the Deity that his anger might never make him commit an unjust action. This was a point so closely applicable to the occasion which had placed him on his knees before the symbol of Him whose life and doctrine was one continued lesson of peace and good will between man and man, that he could not seriously enter on it, without closely questioning the motives which impelled him to demand a judicial combat, and his right thus to proclaim himself the champion of God; he offered up his prayers to the throne from whence right thoughts proceed, and he believed that in pursuing the destroyer of his sister, and giving him the alternative, of either compensating to her, as far as in him lay, the injury he had already done, or exposing himself to the Divine vengeance, through the instrumentality of her brother's sword, he should, so that he divested himself of all revengeful feelings, discharge his duty as a servant

vant of God. The wicked, he thought, are not to triumph in their iniquity because the lightning do not strike them dead, nor the earth open and swallow them up; neither are they, because their offences are beyond the pale of the common law, established by man for his preservation, to escape punishment. The sum of misery occasioned by seducing a young and innocent person from the paths of virtue, may be greater than that occasioned by a murder—the consequences to the victim in the world to come may be immeasurably more dreadful; the murdered person is suddenly cut off, as one who has died by the thousand accidents which snap the thread of life—his sins are on him, and he dies without any studied repentance; but the person seduced into vice, may go step by step, day by day, in that gradual progression of sin, that the knife of the murderer, or rather, a blow from Heaven, would have been a blessing, had it been sped in the happiest hour

hour of youthful innocence. Yet for this great crime no law of man holds out its terrors. Dispassionate men judge, condemn, and hire a brutal wretch to execute a man who has murdered another, or stolen a horse, a sheep, or a shilling's worth of inert matter, but holds out no terror of gyves and halter for him who has seduced a young and innocent female from her parents' arms, and has then left her a prey to infamy—to vice—to atrocious crime—perhaps to self-destruction!

Eustace felt his temples burn; he prayed, and again more calmly thought—Judicial combat in this case supplies that in which the common law is deficient. It is true, that the vindicator of the sufferer risks his own life against the wrong doer, but it enhances the solemnity of the appeal; the spectators do not go to behold that of which they know the termination—they go with the intense feeling of beholding two men making a solemn appeal to God, in which one of them

them must be false, and risking their lives against each other in support of their truth. He who has justice on his side must feel confident; he who knows himself to be guilty, must be a coward at heart, let him assume what front he may.

Eustace believed that trial by judicial combat was sanctioned by the Almighty, as much as the common law contrived by man for the preservation of himself and property in a state of society; and he again knelt and prayed, that when the hour of combat should arrive, he might be so tempered in spirit, that all pollution of earthly passions should be far from him, and that he should be strong alone in the confidence of a righteous cause and the justice of God, and that his triumph might be that of virtue over sin.

Eustace continued his meditations, but there was one subject on which he found himself less able to come to a decisive view and determination than he had hitherto flattered himself he had the power of
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of doing. He had thought he had given up all hopes of possessing Adeline—he had imagined that he could calmly behold her the wife of another—that her happiness was so exclusively his aim, that he could rejoice in that without participating in it with her; but when he now severely probed his heart, he found he had deceived himself—that he had nourished hope, without being aware that he was doing so, and that should the moment arrive when he would know that that hope was utterly annihilated, he would be filled with despair. Again he knelt and prayed, but he arose with the same tumult in his heart, the same fever in his brain. He paced slowly before the altar, his arms folded, and his white raiment sweeping the marble floor; his steel arms and armour—the high altar—the vaulted chapel—ceased to be present to his imagination; he beheld, he thought of nothing, but Adeline.

Morning dawned through the pointed arch

arch and richly-stained glass of the east window, gradually eclipsing the light of the waxen tapers which stood on the altar beneath. Eustace paused and looked up; his eyes fell on the red chevrons and green field of the house of Clare, above which shone the sacred cross surrounded by a radiant glory; his soul was fired—"Yes," he mentally said, "the path of glory is pointed out; I will not pine in indolent obscurity over a hopeless passion—my shield shall be dedicated to the blessed cross—my name shall be enrolled amongst its champions—a glorious duty shall occupy my active hours, and the memory of thee, Adeline, shall chasten those which are private."

He knelt before the altar and was buried in prayer when a slow and noiseless procession of monks entered the chapel. The service of high mass commenced, and Eustace received the holy sacrament. He was then conducted by four esquires to the bath, and afterwards his armour was
put

put on according to the prescribed rule. First was drawn on the chausses of steel-ringed mail, which covered the upper part of his limbs from the middle of the thigh to the sole of the foot, across which, and the back of the legs, they were bound with leathern straps; next was put on a gamboised hauketon, fitting tight to the body and reaching to the middle of the thighs; then the gorget, and over it and the hauketon a hauberk of steel rings with tight sleeves, and covering, in an undivided piece, the back of the hands and fingers. The hauberk also descended to the middle of the thighs. A capuchin, or hood of mail, was attached to the upper part of the hauberk, and could be worn over the head; but it was thrown back when Eustace was reconducted to the chapel.

Every part of the chapel was filled with the family and vassals of the earl, his military servants and domestic officers, besides those inferior members of his nume-

rous household who could contrive to obtain a peep at the ceremony.

Before the altar were the monks, the bell and the incense-bearers; and a little before it on the right hand, stood the earl of Gloucester and his brother lord Thomas de Clare, clad in flowing vestments of state; while behind them stood a group of knights in armour, but with uncovered heads, their helmets being carried by their esquires, who spread still further back. On the left of the altar stood the young and beautiful countess, the lady Agnes, and Adeline; and behind them a large group of gentlewomen. The countess and lady Agnes were splendidly attired, but Adeline's appearance was almost that of a nun of Mount Carmel. The countess wore an open coronet of gold with pearls—Agnes a wreath of jewellery.

Eustace was conducted by two knights through the marshalled crowd, and when he had ascended the three steps which led up to the altar, and was thus immediately
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in front of the august and splendid assemblage, he knelt, and crossing his hands upwards on his breast, all present sunk on their knees, and the officiating priest chanted the sacred service. When this was ended, the golden spurs and the baldric were buckled on the heels and round the waist of Eustace.

The earl of Gloucester advanced and drew his sword of state, and struck him, with the flat of the blade, across the shoulders.—“ Arise, sir Eustace Fitz-Richard!—be pious, faithful, and valiant!”

The organ pealed forth—the priests and choristers sang the praises of God—the spectators murmured applause—and Eustace, surrounded by his noble friends, was welcomed into the rank of chivalry.

The earl of Gloucester celebrated this exercise of his privilege of conferring the honour of knighthood, with the solemnity, magnificence, and profuse hospitality, which became the splendour of

his house; and as the most honourable requital for the timely service Eustace had rendered him in the field at Lewes : for however eager the earl was, in the heat of conflict, on beholding his antagonist, the king of the Romans, at his feet, to rush on him, and seize him as his prisoner, he became fully sensible, on reflection, that, had not Eustace rushed in and thrown the king from his horse, he was himself so circumstanced at the moment, that he must have been struck to the earth by Richard. Independent of this claim on Gloucester, there was not a warrior who had that day fought under his standard, to whom the general voice had conceded so large a share of admiration as had been bestowed on Eustace. If then honour was due to a brave man, who had achieved so much glory for the banner under which he had voluntarily fought, how much was the desire to distinguish him enhanced by the service he had rendered to his sister Agnes !—a service

vice

vice which had lost nothing of its importance from the manner in which it had been related by lord Thomas, and which was perhaps greater than at the first sight it might have appeared to be, as circumstances had since transpired which led the earl to suspect that it was not an attack for the sake of plunder alone, but that the banditti had been hired for the purpose of carrying off lady Agnes, but by whom, he had not yet been able to discover.

While the earl on the one hand celebrated the ceremony with distinguished honour, Eustace testified his estimation of it in a manner corresponding with his father's wealth; he dedicated to God, on the altar of the chapel, a large silver cup, richly chased and gilt, and set with precious stones, and granted a perpetual fee for the providing of two wax tapers, to burn for ever before the picture of the blessed Virgin. At the gate of the castle he presented to the earl two Arabian horses, of matchless beauty and speed;

and to the heralds, pages, and minstrels, he distributed largesses with a profuse hand. These acts of munificence excited the admiration and applause of the multitude, and silenced, if it did not stifle, the envy of those who coveted an honour which they could not afford to maintain, however well entitled to it from their birth.

In the course of the day the new knight displayed his skill in the tilt-yard, and received, as conqueror in the jousts, a beautifully-embroidered cointise of rose-coloured silk, from the hand of the lady Agnes. When he knelt to her, and she stooped to throw it over his shoulders, there was a tear stood in her eye, perhaps the only one that had been there from the years of childhood; but it was not one of sorrow—it was one of tenderness and of pride, at beholding him she loved the object of general honour.

At the banquet, the new knight was placed on the earl's right hand, and to him the sewer first brought the accurately-carved

carved peacock. Ceremony and feasting went hand in hand; the red wine was quaffed, and the minstrels struck their harps, and sang the praises of heroes of other days, and promised immortal fame to Eustace Fitz-Richard.

By break of day the following morning Eustace set out, and regained the ship in which he had quitted London for the purpose of pursuing Emeric, when he had, by contrary winds, been obliged to put into a small port at the mouth of the Medway, and had there learnt of Emeric's having landed a few hours before, and set out for Dover. Eustace's ship was commanded by Fitz-Harding, who had resumed his nautical profession when he found he could be serviceable to his afflicted friends; and as Eustace, from the first moment of discovering that Emeric was the partner of his sister's flight, had determined on soliciting the honour of knighthood before he should quit the kingdom, that he might be qualified to

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demand,

demand, in any country, a judicial combat, Fitz-Harding had, during his friend's absence to some of the cinque ports, busied himself in procuring from London those gifts with which Eustace intended to testify his sense of the honour with which he sought to be invested.

When he now, a belted knight, rejoined the veteran, and had informed Fitz-Harding of Emeric's having crossed the country, for the purpose of embarking from the Sussex coast for Normandy, or perhaps a more southern province of France, with the intention of going to his own country of Provence, Fitz-Harding proposed that, as the wind was now favourable, they should set sail, and steer their course to the first port in France they could most conveniently gain, and then make the best of their way to the country of the seducer.—“And now,” said Fitz-Harding, a smile illumining his face, the first which had been there since
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the flight of Margaret, "I have a boon to ask at the hands of sir Eustace."

"It is granted," said Eustace, with similar manner.

"You are a rash knight," said Fitz-Harding, "for you have encumbered yourself with an aged squire, who will perhaps be too apt to be a monitor to his master."

"Do you mean this seriously, my friend?" said Eustace.

"Yes, seriously, both touching the squireship and the counsellorship," said Fitz-Harding; "and as to my qualifications for both offices, you know I am an old soldier, although I have fought on a ship's deck instead of a green field; and I have visited many lands, and know the customs of many people; added to which, I am fifty years of age; so that, if it was ever intended I should have any good sense, it should now be in my possession. These are my qualifications for being squire and counsellor to a young
K 5 knight,

knight, commencing his career in foreign lands. As to the minor points, of putting on and taking off your armour, attending to your horses, and keeping your arms and armour in good condition, I shall beg to leave them to your man Langley, a clever and a good servant, but rather too loose a fellow, although he may in time mend, for the honourable office of esquire to sir Eustace Fitz-Richard."

This was too valuable an offer not to be gratefully accepted by Eustace, who knew Fitz-Harding's character too well to doubt that it was made with the most perfect sincerity.

Eustace had been furnished with letters, both by the earl and countess of Gloucester, to many of the sovereign princes of France, by which his passage through their states would be facilitated, and an honourable reception given both to himself and to his demands. Fitz-Harding gave the necessary orders, the sails were set, and favourable winds carried

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ried the ship through the foaming sea. Prepared for pirates, yet willing to pass them, Fitz-Harding scarcely quitted the deck; and when in the English Channel, the wind serving, and no danger appearing, he pursued a longer course than was originally proposed, with the view of landing nearly to where lord Emeric had probably steered to from the coast of Sussex; and on the fifth day, Eustace and he, with Langley and two grooms, landed at Dieppe in Normandy.

CHAPTER VII.
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NEARLY twelve months had elapsed since the events related in the last chapter, when, one evening, three persons were journeying along the left bank of the Severn; two of them, mounted on mules, appeared, by their garb, and the escalop shell each wore in the front of his broad flapped hat, to be palmers, returning from a pilgrimage to the holy shrine of saint James of Compostella; while the third, who was their attendant, rode a strong horse, and led a sumpter mule, heavily burthened. The elder traveller had a weather-beaten visage, but there was an expression in his countenance which indicated a disposition which, however much it might be at moments moved, was, in its general character, contented and cheerful.

ful. The face of the younger palmer was embrowned by southern suns, and its character, which was bold and ingenuous, seemed to have been softened by early care.

As the travellers gained the brow of a hill, they looked back on the distant sea, behind which the sun was setting in resplendent glory.—“ Thanks to our patron, the ever-blessed saint James!” said the senior, devoutly crossing himself, “ we have escaped the pursuit of those pirates : may God grant that the ships, in which were Valence, Warenne, and Bigod, with their gallant followers, may have been equally fortunate !”

The younger traveller uttered a similar wish, but immediately sunk into silence. The elder palmer looked with a glistening eye on his companion, and then said, with a cheerful voice —“ Shake off this despondence, my friend, and be what I have seen you in the battle fields of Spain ; dwell not on subjects which are now beyond

yond the control of human agency, but think of what is glorious in the past, and look forward with confidence to the future!"

"And again find that I have pursued a shadow," said the junior, a faint smile illumining his countenance.

"He who has not hope in his soul, is without the spirit which commands success," said the senior.

The young palmer blushed, and a returning fire flashed from his eyes—"The spirit which led me against the enemies of the cross," said he, "will animate me against those of my country; but I may be allowed to despair, where a deep-rooted conviction has long told me I have nothing to hope. In the field of battle, Fitz-Harding, you will still find me the same, full of hope and confidence; but if you look into my bosom, in my hours of privacy, you will find that on that subject which could alone constitute my future happiness on earth, all is black despair."

"Then

“ ‘Then indulge not in hours of privacy,’ said Fitz-Harding; “mix in the world of man—forget woman and her syren smiles—think only of martial glory; place your hand on the golden collar beneath your tunic; recollect when, and for what, the king of Leon conferred it on you; and with the same ardour which then won you so much renown, draw your sword in the conflict which is about to shake this island to its centre.”

“When that time arrives,” said Eustace, “I will endeavour to efface the recollection of the side on which I fought at Lewes. But, my friend, although I have not followed Alwyn’s advice, of adopting as my motto, ‘I live in hope!’ I do not forget the one which is painted on my shield, ‘Faithful ever.’ I shall therefore still serve Adeline, should she require aid, although hopeless of her love.”

“But why not hope?” said Fitz-Harding; “women admire gallantry, and are prepared to love the hero before they see him,

him. Was it not so with Alwyn? Adeline, you thought, loved him at first sight; if so, there must have been some association in her mind, which his appearance realized, but did not create. His fame had gone before him; imagination has more to do than the heart, in a passion so awakened; it is a dream which can be succeeded by another, or may altogether perish before a deep sense of important services, rendered by one who has attained to at least equal fame."

"Your argument is more specious than correct," said Eustace; "services may excite gratitude, but cannot enkindle love; and although I admit that the sort of passion you have described may change from object to object, as each new one seems to the imagination to possess some peculiar excellence, a true devotion of the soul is unchangeable; and I feel that so strong as is my love for Adeline, so is hers for Alwyn."

"Then why not struggle to obtain the  
mastery

mastery over a passion which must make you wretched?" said Fitz-Harding.

"Have I not forbidden myself to hope?" said Eustace; "do I desire more than to serve Adeline? So help me God, if I knew of my rival's prison, if he be still a captive, I would, to make her happy, do all that in me lies to set him free!"

It was nearly dark, and Fitz-Harding looked eagerly forward, in the hopes of descrying some building in which they might pass the night; when coming over the face of a hill, at a little distance, he thought he saw a body of men advancing. What the feeble light would not enable him to be certain of, the evening breeze confirmed, by bringing on its wings the trampling sounds of horses. As they approached, a single horseman rode forward, and challenged them by saying, as he halted at a few paces distance from where Eustace and Fitz-Harding had stopped their mules—"Of what party? name your banner."

"Pilgrims

“Pilgrims returned from saint James’s shrine at Compostella,” said Fitz-Harding.

The horseman rode back to his party, who were continuing to advance, and immediately another galloped up to the pilgrims. There was still sufficient light to discover an object immediately at hand, and with an exclamation of joy Eustace recognised Thomas de Clare. The friends mutually embraced, and after some hasty questions, De Clare prevailed on the travellers to accompany him to a monastery, which lay about three miles to the right of the route they were pursuing, and where they would find accommodation for the night.

As they rode along, lord Thomas inquired the result of Eustace’s pursuit of Emeric, and was informed that he had traced him from court to court in France, but that he seemed to flit before him as a mystical being, who was ever heard of, but never to be overtaken. In this chase he had at length entered the Pyrenees—  
had



had sought him at the court of Navarre—had heard of him at the capital of old Castile, and pursued him to that of Arragon; and wherever Emeric had been, he heard of his being attended by a beautiful English page. At length he beheld Emeric at the court of Leon, but instead of being attended by the English page, Emeric, in reply to the indignant questions of Eustace, conducted him into the presence of the queen, and there he beheld his sister honoured as the wife of the Provençal lord. Into the bosom of her brother Margaret poured her tale, and wept over her joy, that she had had the courage to give those proofs of her confidence in the honour of Emeric, and her perfect reliance on him under every trial, which had at length won from him the conviction that he had discovered that which he had so long sought, a heart which could love him, and seek no pleasure but in his smile. When fully satisfied of this, the romantic Troubadour had received at the altar the  
hand

hand of the blushing maid. Eustace was satisfied, although he could not but censure them for the unhappiness they had caused, and the injurious suspicions to which his sister had been subjected. It was after this termination of his pursuit that Eustace had so eminently distinguished himself against the Saracens.

In reply to the anxious inquiries of Eustace, Thomas de Clare briefly communicated the circumstances which had occurred to his family since the departure of Fitz-Richard.—“ You left us,” continued Clare, “ chafed at Simon Montfort; but we were worth courting, and although Gilbert wisely kept aloof, I was snared, and once more became the favourite of lord Leicester. I was induced to view my brother’s injuries, touching the ransom of the king of the Romans, and the other barons he had taken at Lewes, as too deeply resented: it was but gold lost. Gilbert had riches enough. Even the insolences of Montfort’s sons, I could pardon

don them, though Gloucester would not. I recollected many of mine own, and thought he might have done the same : but at length my reliance on the honour of lord Leicester was shook ; it became notorious that Henry Montfort proposed the tourney which was lately to have been held at Northampton ; and challenged Gilbert there to try with him his skill in arms, for the purpose of seizing an opportunity of making away with him. Gloucester prudently kept away ; and although staggered by all I heard, I still continued with Leicester, and in immediate attendance on prince Edward, as companion to him in his captivity ; but when we proceeded hitherwards to Hereford, and I discovered that it was for the purpose of seizing the castles of my ancestors, my eyes began to open to the real character of Montfort ; and when Gilbert conveyed to me irrefragable proofs of his treachery and grasping ambition, I determined on shaking off the yoke with which I had hitherto

hitherto been enthralled. I had also learnt to feel for the situation of the gallant prince, who, contrary to all faith, was kept as a captive instead of as an hostage, when a plan was communicated to me by Gilbert, which I have now quitted Hereford for the purpose of assisting in carrying into execution. And now, my friend, what says sir Eustace Fitz-Richard—is he ready to join the standards of those who would emancipate the king and prince, or will he again fight under that of Simon Montfort?”

“Under the latter, never!” said Eustace; “but I must know what is proposed, before I embark in any enterprise which is not sanctioned by the presence of the king or prince.”

“I will not quarrel with you for your caution,” said lord Thomas; “I was not won by the first whistle of the lords marchers, and to secure you, I will freely disclose our plans, so that you pledge your  
faith

faith not to expose them, should you not embrace them."

Eustace readily gave the desired pledge, and in a retired chamber of the monastery, whither they retired soon after their arrival, lord Thomas put him in possession of the project which had been entered into by the earl of Gloucester and Roger Mortimer. Eustace being perfectly free from those engagements, which, previous to the last peace, had bound him to the party of which Leicester was the head, readily entered into the measures of the lords marchers; and having plighted his word to lord Thomas, turned the subject to one still nearer his heart, and earnestly inquired for the lady Adeline.

"There—there is another proof of the unbearable insolence, injustice, and tyranny of Montfort," said lord Thomas; "a more audacious insult was never offered to our house; and yet he so glozed it over to me, that I at first believed him right;  
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at least I did not think so ill of it as I have since done."

"What mean you? what has he done?" said Eustace, with breathless anxiety.

"By the mass, I am in a fever when I think of it!" said lord Thomas: "to us! to offer such an insult to the Clares—and to employ a baron who has fought under our standard—that John Fitz-John——"

"In God's name, tell me what has happened!" said Eustace, unable to restrain himself.

"We will have our revenge," said lord Thomas. "You, my friend, have traversed the mountains of Galicia, to pray at saint James's tomb, no doubt in fulfilment of a vow, and bearing rich offerings—so did the ladies of our house; the countess, Agnes, and the lady Adeline, with a large train of gentlewomen, set out from Tunbridge Castle to saint Thomas's shrine at Canterbury; Gilbert was here in the Welsh marches, and I with the court, and the ladies trusted that they might travel

so short a distance without any other escort than a train of unarmed pilgrims. They made their vows, and offered their rich gifts at Becket's shrine. But so the devil contrived it, a certain Franciscan friar discovered the fair Adeline amongst the votaries of saint Thomas. She saw him, and trembling, told Agnes of her fears. Agnes, true to her noble blood, scoffed at fears from a paltry friar: but it were sometimes better to recollect, that the small and contemptible asp can give as fatal a wound as the royal lion."

"But the end, the end of this?" said Eustace; "forgive my impatience."

"Well then, if you must have me tell of an insult on my family," said lord Thomas, "thus it was:—After three days' prayers, and penitence, and masses, crowned with a feast given by the archbishop, the pilgrims prepared to set out, but had scarcely quitted the cathedral gates, when John Fitz-John, at the head of an armed force, with that cursed Franciscan friar at

his elbow, stopped the way, and demanded, in the king's name, the body of the lady Adeline de Melmonby, a ward of the crown, and under the especial guardianship of Simon Montfort, earl of Leicester."

"Why did she not fly back, and beseech the protection of the archbishop?" said Eustace.

"Why had she not five hundred armed vassals of Gilbert de Clare, that she might have scoffed at Fitz-John and his master!" said lord Thomas, with some hauteur; then checking himself, added—"But we deserve mortification for having set the puppet up—but we will down with him."

"I pray you tell me the issue," said Eustace.

Lord Thomas's countenance changed; he almost laughed as he said—"No one but Agnes can tell the scene which followed; she stormed, nay almost swore at Fitz-John, the friar, and at Boniface himself, who with his mitre on his head, and crosier



crozier in hand, endeavoured to awe the tumult which this impudent demand had excited amongst our unarmed vassals. The countess, in princely style, rated Boniface for being so disloyal to his brother-in-law the king, as to sanction such aggression in his name—the bishop declared he was only obeying the king's commands in surrendering the lady to her legal guardian—Adeline had thrown herself at his feet, and clung to his vestments, imploring protection — Fitz-John insisted, and the friar harangued—all Canterbury pressed towards the cathedral, and the pilgrims and priests thronged at the open gates—some said the veiled lady at the archbishop's feet was a nun who had escaped from her convent—others that she was the runaway wife of the grim baron on the Flanders horse—in short, the devil had let loose the rabble, given power to priests and murderers, disarmed loyal men, and seized on a prize worthy of a king's

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throne—

throne—John Fitz-John carried off the fair Adeline.”

Eustace had expected this termination of lord Thomas's intelligence, but it was not the less afflicting because it had been anticipated. He however so far suppressed his feelings as to inquire if lord Thomas knew whither lady Adeline had been carried?

“To Kenilworth,” replied Clare, “where she reposes under the protection of the princess Eleanor, until her marriage with this Scottish knight.”

Eustace inquired when that event was likely to take place?

“Sir Adam lately pressed his suit on Leicester,” replied lord Thomas, “and obtained the earl's permission to proceed to Kenilworth, and, if successful with the lady, was to escort her to Hereford, and there solemnize the marriage: the time allowed sir Adam will expire to-morrow; so, if fortunate, he will now be on his way with his fair bride.”

Eustace

Eustace then had arrived in time to witness the marriage of her he loved, not with his rival in her affections, but with the mercenary suitor to whom her guardian had sold her ! his soul was oppressed, but he betrayed not the torture he suffered. He determined to proceed on to Hereford, and endeavour to behold Adeline ; and should she wish to shun the sacrifice, devote his life to her rescue.

When lord Thomas understood Eustace's intention of going to Hereford, he gave him a commission to Roger de Lacy, Gloucester's and Mortimer's secret negotiator with the prince ; and with mutual good wishes for the success of the enterprise which was on the point of being attempted, they separated for the night.

On the following morning they departed from the monastery—Thomas de Clare to the castle of one of the lords marchers, and Eustace with Fitz-Harding for Hereford. On their way, Eustace put Fitz-Harding in possession of the pro-

jected enterprise, and also of the leading events which had during their absence alienated from Leicester's party not only the earl of Gloucester, but many other persons of note, and who were now in arms, ready to strike a blow for the emancipation of their country from the detested yoke of the ambitious Montfort.

As they approached Hereford, they beheld the devastation which that unfortunate city had experienced the preceding year from the Welsh under Llewellyn; nor did the cathedral seem to have recovered the sacrilegious violation it had undergone, when the barons had seized and dragged Peter Aqua Blanca from the high altar. Near to the cathedral arose the eminence on which the castle stood; it was precipitous, and laved on two sides by the river, and on the other two by a broad moat. The summit of the hill was defended by a lofty wall with towers, and was divided into two unequal areas by a cross wall. In the larger space were situated

ated the governor's house, the chapel, and other buildings, and in the lesser one was an artificial circular mount, on which stood the dongeon, defended by eleven towers, and surmounted by the keep, consisting of one massive round tower; on this waved the standard of England, and marked the present residence of the captive king; for to style him otherwise than Montfort's prisoner would be mockery.

The palmers sought an obscure lodging in the half-deserted city, and when they had obtained one, Eustace sent Langley to obtain intelligence whether sir Adam Gordon had returned from Kenilworth, and how accompanied. In the course of the evening his messenger returned, and informed Eustace that sir Adam had arrived that very day, and with no other person than the squire and score of lances with whom he had set out. This intelligence, assuring Eustace of Adeline's present safety, allowed him to give all his

present attention to the service of the prince, and made him determine on seeking on the morrow admission into the castle, in the hope of seeing Roger de Lacy.

CHAPTER VIII.  
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IN the morning, Eustace, on his mule, set out alone for the castle. As Eustace sought admission at the outer gate, a party of armed men came up, apparently from a long journey, and who seemed the escort of an unarmed cavalier. Eustace made way for them to pass, intending to follow them as soon as the bridge should be let down. The cavalier turned his head, and Eustace beheld that it was Alwyn; but his visage was so wasted, either by sickness or grief, that he would scarcely have recognised him, had not peculiar circumstances made his countenance ever present to his mind. He beheld his rival—that rival whom he doubted not was beloved by Adeline; he was still a captive, and brought to the same prison as

that of his prince, at the moment that that prince was meditating his own escape ; what grief, what mortification, would it be to the gallant knight, who was perhaps cheered, after so many months imprisonment, with the hopes of sharing the remainder of it with his royal master, to find that he had arrived but to hear that his prince was free, while he himself was doomed to pine in inactivity !

Eustace contrived to approach the knight, and said to him, in the Spanish tongue—" Sir Alwyn, recognise me not ; but should the prince go forth to ride, accompany him."

Alwyn looked earnestly at Eustace, and appeared to know him ; but, guided by Eustace's caution, he answered in the same language—" I am a prisoner, and know not that I should have permission, were I able ; but truly this journey, in my present exhausted health, has almost destroyed me."

" Bear

“Bear up, sir knight,” said Eustace; “a royal hart will this day be hunted—we must throw out the hounds; and there is a fair maiden pines in the towers of Kenilworth for thy arm to set her free—Adeline de Melmonby.”

A flush came over the wan countenance of Alwyn, his eyes sparkled, and he rose more erect in his saddle.

“How now, sir palmer,” said a knight, in Norman French, “art thou speaking Latin to our prisoner, or Spanish? for I suppose, by the scallop in thy hat, thou art from saint James’s tomb of Compostella.”

“You speak rightly,” said Eustace; “and I crave of your courtesy, sir knight, to permit my entering the castle with you. I want a licence from the noble earl of Leicester to reassume my knightly arms.”

“Saint George forbid I should bar a Christian knight from reassuming his lance and sword!” said the knight; “but

I have here no power to befriend you ; yet, if the warder don't question you, you are right welcome to pass in along with my party."

At this moment the bridge was lowered, and they passed beneath the guarded gate, and ascended the winding road, up the steep side of the hill.

When admitted through the gates into the extensive space where stood the governor's house, an officer advanced, and desired the guard to conduct sir Alwyn to the dongeon. Then approaching Eustace, demanded his business at the castle. Eustace briefly repeated the same reason he had assigned to the commander of Alwyn's escort, and was then informed that the earl of Leicester was engaged in council in the keep, but that when he should return to the governor's house, the palmer's wishes should be made known.

But although Eustace found it necessary to assign a secondary, instead of his principal reason, for entering Hereford
Castle,

Castle, and had thus been allowed to enter that portion of it occupied by the governor, he found himself excluded from passing the gate which led to the enclosure where the chief fortress was situated. The mount, the numerous towers of the dongeon, and the massive keep, rose majestically above all surrounding objects—it was there the king and prince were lodged. To speak with Roger de Lacy was his chief object, but he was in the dongeon, and he had been cautioned by Thomas de Clare not to inquire for him, but to trust to fortune's favouring him with an interview. Eustace therefore waited near a group of persons who were standing by the governor's gate.

“Who is that knight who was just now brought prisoner into the castle?” said one.

“I know not his name,” said another; “but I hear he was taken at Lewes.”

“Or afterwards?” said the first speaker, with a peculiar smile.

“Oh,

“ Oh, that matters little,” said the other.

“ There I don’t agree with you,” rejoined the other. “ It is hard enough on a brave knight who has had the misfortune to be taken in battle not to be admitted to ransom ; but what are we to say of his fate, who was not taken, and yet clapped into prison ?”

“ I will say, friend Gondibert, that they are foolish men who discuss such matters in Hereford Castle, on this good vigil of the Blessed Trinity,” said the other. “ It is now—let me think how long it is since the battle of Lewes—Ha ! master Nicholas, you can tell : how oft hast thou trimmed the noble earl of Leicester’s beard since the fight at Lewes ?”

This was addressed to a man of a smart active figure, a sallow complexion, and a dark piercing eye, clad in a white tunic, and pale blue hose, who was at the moment passing. He paused, and threw a quick

quick glance around, smiled, and stroked his pointed beard.

“How often trimmed my lord’s beard since we won the grand battle?” said master Nicholas. “Let me see—there was the day after he broke his leg, I touched it not; and there was the day——”

“Tut, man! I want to know, by aid of thy memory, how long it is since the battle was fought?” said master Nicholas’s interrogator.

“And how can I calculate, unless I deduct the days on which I trimmed not my lord’s beard, from those on which I had the honour to officiate?” said the barber: “but I have it—here are these three beads of my rosary; this one stands for three hundred, this second for sixty, and this third for nine, and now here this fourth bead stands for seven; now, my masters, let us see how many all these four beads make.”

“Faith, that is beyond my skill to reckon,” said his querist.

“I can

"I can reckon straight forward on my ten fingers, and even, as to the matter of that, can count the number of beads on thy rosary, master Nicholas," said he who was called Gondibert; "but as to reckoning thy three hundred, and sixty, and nine, and seven, it is altogether past my skill."

"But you must understand, sir Gondibert," said Nicholas, "that I have trimmed my lord's beard on three hundred and sixty-nine days since the battle of Lewes, and on eight days since we won that great victory have I not trimmed my lord's beard; now I opine, that if we could put those eight days of unavoidable omission to those three hundred and sixty-nine days of meritorious commission, we should come at the truth."

"There is reason on the face of it," said Gondibert; "and surely, master Nicholas, you can do so small a matter."

"Small as you may think it, worshipful knight," said Nicholas, "it requires
some

some learning to do it in a clerkly manner."

"Of which, I thank God, I have as little as any knight of my family," said sir Gondibert; "and so I will, for my part, leave the matter to you, master barber."

"Nor could you have put it into better hands," said Nicholas, counting with his fingers on his beads. "It is three hundred and seventy-seven days since the fight was fought at Lewes."

"And how long will it be, reckonest thou, ere we have another such glorious day?" said Gondibert.

Master Nicholas looked at him with a keen expression, and said, with a reserved air—"Which way sets the wind this vigil of Holy Trinity, sir Gondibert?"

"No one knows better than you do, master Nicholas," said Gondibert, "which way the wind sets. Is there no storm brewing towards Gloucester? no chance of a burly,

burly, where a poor knight might win a tower and a tything?"

"There will be the skins of two March hares," said Nicholas with a grim smile; "a tuft of them might help to keep you warm in the winter."

"Ha! think you the Mortimers' and the Gloucesters' lands will be forfeited?" said Gondibert.

"I named them not," said Nicholas, mysteriously; "but spoke of mad March hares. Perhaps this holy palmer, who has listened to our foolery, can give us some news of what is stirring abroad, better than we, who are cooped up in a castle."

"Of what has passed in Spain I can, and something of what is doing on the broad seas," said Eustace, composedly.

"Oh, keep thy Spanish news," said the barber; "but if thou knowest aught of what the brave Cinquers have done within the last month, out with it; it will
serve

serve me for discourse for my lord when I trim his beard."

"The brave Cinquers then," said Eustace, "make clear seas—foreign or English vessels are alike to them; and lest the plundered should murmur, they kindly throw them overboard."

"Oh, they are right brave sailors," said master Nicholas.

"They have keen swords," said Eustace, "and have had a rich harvest; lord Henry Montfort's thirds will make no small sum."

"A trifle! a trifle!" said the barber; "but with the wool, and some other good things, not amiss.—How came you to escape, sir palmer?"

"The ever-blessed saint James protected his poor votary," said the palmer.

"May I make bold to inquire," said the barber, "if your worship has brought any tidings to prince Edward from his princely lady's kindred in Spain? I have the honour to trim his mustaches, and should
be

be proud to convey pleasing intelligence to the ears of the noble prince."

Eustace considered that Leicester would not have allowed his own barber to attend the captive prince, unless he was confident in his fidelity; he was therefore disposed to suspect master Nicholas of a design to penetrate whether he had a communication to make the prince, not for the purpose of apprizing Edward of it, but lord Leicester; under this impression, he replied—"I served under the standard of Leon, not of Castile, and during a short truce made a pilgrimage to Compostella, then taking shipping at Corunna, sailed for France, and from thence for England, and having landed on the western coast, seek the noble Leicester's permission to travel homewards as becomes a Christian knight."

"Should you think me worthy of mentioning your request to my noble master," said the barber, "it will probably be as speedily granted as though it were preferred

ferred by one of these gentlemen with golden spurs."

"I thank you for your offer," said Eustace.

The barber bowed consequentially, and entered the castle.

"A murrain on his insolence!" said Gondibert; "a pretty pass we are come to, when a paltry barber boasts of greater influence than a belted knight!"

"A paltry barber!" cried another; "master Nicholas trims lord Leicester's beard, and points his mustaches; he cuts his corns, and is his sovereign leech: but more than all these, he tells him what is said by all the vapouring fools who surround him: when Nicholas is within ear-shot, I keep my tongue from wagging."

"And it were as well you did so, sir Rowland, when I am within ear-shot, if you meant to include me amongst the vapouring fools of whom you just now spoke," said Gondibert.

"Nay, friend Gondibert, I prithee take
not

not my words to thyself," said Rowland ;
" we all know you to be as discreet of
tongue as thou art skilful with thy lance."

" A scurvy praise from one who thinks
himself the better of the two," said Gon-
dibert.

" On my honour, the last advantage I
had over thee in the tilt-yard," said Row-
land, " was more owing to good fortune
on my part, than want of skill on thine.—
Ha ! the prince is descending from the don-
geon mount ; let us to the base court, and
mount our horses—we must attend him."

The prince, with several attendants,
descended from the dongeon, and entered
the great area of the castle.

" Does the prince go forth to hunt ?"
said Eustace, more particularly addressing
sir Rowland.

" Oh no !" replied the knight, " he is
going to exercise in a meadow beneath the
castle."

" Since the place is so little distant,"
said Eustace, " and as it may be some
time

time before I can have audience of lord Leicester, I will, with your leave, witness the sports."

The request was courteously met, and having mounted his mule at the lower gate, Eustace crossed the drawbridge with the now numerous train of the prince. The field of exercise was a spacious meadow, within view of the castle, in parts marshy, and dotted with clumps of willows and alders, but in others dry, and being kept closely grazed, was well suited for exercise. At the distance of a mile the ground swelled into hills, which were partially covered with timber; and as the varied scene of hill and dale retired from the eye, the landscape became more thickly forested, until the whole was terminated by the blue line of the Welsh mountains.

Eustace, with secret satisfaction, observed Alwyn riding near the prince, although the countenance and air of the knight indicated that he was fitter for his couch than the back of a horse; but yet
should

should this be the day of the prince regaining his freedom, how much would his friend have scorned repose, even on the point of death, instead of sharing in the enterprise ! There was another consideration had a momentary place in the breast of Eustace : Alwyn at liberty, would have the power of devoting himself to the service of Adeline ; were he not so——Eustace spurned the ungenerous thought.

Lord Peter Montfort, a powerful baron of a Norman race, but not of Leicester's blood, was the present governor of Hereford Castle, and now attended the prince as his keeper. His conduct towards the prince, since Edward had been in his custody, had been marked by a liberality and courtesy which the prince had not experienced from any of his former gaolers, especially Henry Montfort at Dover Castle, who had sought every occasion to display his arrogant insolence to his cousin and future sovereign, while he had at the same time permitted the prince to behold from the

the towers of his prison the barbarous piracies committed under his sanction by the ships of the cinque ports—piracies unexampled in barbarity, and in the plunder of which he shared. These enormities, which Edward himself beheld, as well as many others, with which the whole land was afflicted, under the iron rule of Leicester, had made the prince hearken to the suggestions of his friends and new allies, and contemplate the making his escape, and by placing himself at the head of the loyal barons, rescue his country from the oppressor's yoke.

The knights and gentlemen who attended the prince, were in fact the guard provided by lord Peter Montfort for the safe custody of his captive while he exercised without the castle walls: to them the prince behaved with the courtesy and bland affability which distinguished his character in private life, and shared in their sports with the spirit of a free companion. Racing was a favourite exercise,

and they had now come forth to the meadow to try their skill in horsemanship.

The races commenced, and Eustace inquired of sir Rowland the names of some of the competitors, when to his joy the knight called one of them Roger de Lacy, who had just ridden in, an unsuccessful candidate in a race won by the prince, and dismounting, was examining his horse near to where Eustace sat on his mule. Sir Rowland's attention was drawn off, and Eustace moving up to Lacy, said, in a low voice—"My lord of Weobly, lord Thomas de Clare commends him to you."

Lacy looked hastily up, and pressing the handle of his whip to his lips, threw a hurried glance around, then stooping, he passed his hand softly over his horse's legs, and shook his head, and swore his bonny roan had strained the tendon; then darting a quick eye on Eustace, said—"The three lions, or——"

"With

“ With the three chevrons gules,” responded Eustace.

“ Enough,” said Lacy. “ What say you, sir palmer, from the gallant Clare?”

“ All is in readiness, and waits but for the prince’s signal,” said Eustace.

De Lacy moved through the crowd, leading his horse, and Eustace saw him speak in the prince’s ear. Edward gently moved his head, and then called aloud on the competitors to start. The turf was spurned by the iron hoofs of the flying steeds, and again the prince won the race. The spirit of rivalry increased—Edward fanned the passion, nor allowed intermission in the sport: but during a race in which he did not ride, Edward rode up to Eustace, saying—“ Ha! a pilgrim from saint James’s shrine.—Make way, gentlemen.—How fares it with the cross, sir palmer? Do its champions maintain the honour of the Christian chivalry?”

“ They do, noble prince,” said Eustace; “ although they greatly repine that they

have not amongst them the English prince, to restore the glorious days of Cœur de Lion."

"My uncle Simon thinks this mead a fitter place of exercise for the son of England's king," said Edward, looking with a bitter smile on those who surrounded him, and who, abashed by that eagle glance, turned their gaze upon their horses' drooping necks. The prince now spoke quickly in the Spanish tongue to Eustace.—"What says Thomas de Clare?"

"That the plan propounded to you by Roger de Lacy is ready for execution," replied Eustace in the same language; "send the signal swords to yonder coppice, and at set of sun mount the steed Lacy rides; on its fleetness lord Mortimer will stake his life."

"What say you, sir palmer, to my lord prince?" said a knight roughly.

"You are malapert, sir Geoffry," said the prince. "If you can yourself speak nothing but bastard French, you should be
be

be silent when those who have the advantage choose to converse in another tongue."

"But when the palmer speaks of two English knights," said sir Geoffry unabashed, "he might be content to use Norman French, or the bastard English you are pleased to patronize, my lord."

The prince darted a withering glance on sir Geoffry; but replied not to him.—"To be subject to this insolence," he said in Spanish, "would make me burst my chains, were it not commanded by a more sacred cause.—Send the page with the swords," he added in even a lower voice, lest any one but the palmer should understand the language in which he spoke. Then turning away, he resumed his sportful vein, and continued the racing without intermission.

Eustace communicated the prince's pleasure to Lacy, who seized a favourable moment for dispatching the page, with the swords concealed under his cloak. Eustace now approached Alwyn, who sat

on his steed a little apart from the crowd, and said to him—"Two hours hence ride gently to the turning-post—the royal chase will there commence."

The ardour with which the prince promoted the races, and the active part he took in them himself, created an enthusiasm which was felt by all, and more especially by the gallant steeds, which were nearly exhausted by their unremitting efforts. At length, as the red sun was sinking behind the distant mountains, a man mounted on a white horse appeared on the brow of a neighbouring hill. He waved his bonnet in the air, and then disappeared in the wood which clothed the side of the mount. The prince saw him, and so did Lacy and Eustace, for their eyes were every moment glancing thitherward.—"Fortune has deserted me," said the prince gaily. "Has no one a horse to lend me that has some wind remaining?"

"You have knocked up mine, my lord,"

lord," said one.—"And mine!—and mine!" said a score more.

"What are you nursing your steed for, Lacy?" said the prince in a careless manner.

"He strained the sinews of his fore legs," said Lacy, "in the first race."

"Let me examine him," said the prince, alighting and feeling the horse's legs. "Tush, man! a little tender. You have shook him in turning. Will you let me ride him?"

"He is but a slight creature," said Lacy hesitatingly: "and you are so long in the fork, my lord prince, and I dare say thirteen stone weight."

"You are churlish," said the prince, turning away.

"I am astonished that any one would refuse the prince so slight a favour," said the lord governor.

"I meant not to do so," said Lacy, leading up the horse to the prince.—

"Pardon me, my lord; the steed is at
M 4 your

your service, even should he be ridden to death under your royal person."

"I thank you," said the prince coldly; "and that you may not be a loser by your awakened courtesy, you shall have my horse in exchange; though now tired, he is worth two of yours.—Here, Bardolph, lengthen these stirrups.—My lord Montfort, will you give me a chance of recovering my gold? your grey is sufficiently in breath."

"With all my heart, my lord prince," said the governor; "but it is scarcely fair to run my gallant steed against such a flimsy, broken-down thing."

"Certainly my weight is against him," said the prince. "Tall men have their disadvantages."

"Their enemies frequently feel otherwise," said the governor, bowing.

Eustace had withdrawn from the crowd, and ridden on towards the turning-post, where he saw Alwyn stationed. He looked back on the dongeon of the castle; the

the setting sun threw a parting gleam on the golden lions, as the standard of England spread broadly out on the steady breeze.—“ May the moment soon arrive, gracious Heaven,” he said mentally, “ when that standard will not wave over the prison of its lord, but strike terror into the hearts of his enemies !”

When he came up with Alwyn, he took a sword from under his palmer’s russet gown, and tendering it to the knight, said, with a cheerful smile—“ I know not whether the prince has had an opportunity of whispering his design.”

“ Whenever he would have spoken, we were interrupted,” said Alwyn.

“ Behold they come,” cried Eustace ; “ take this sword—it is to be used only in self-defence. Follow the prince.”

The racers came on, led by the prince and governor, and when they came up to Alwyn and Eustace, the prince took off his bonnet, and addressed lord Montfort —“ I thank you, my lord, for your many

courtesies, and now dispense with your further attendance. My lord, farewell!" So saying, the prince gave the reins to his generous steed, which he had hitherto held in, and scoured along the meadow with the fleetness of the wind. Alwyn gave his untired horse the spur, and Eustace rode off towards the nearest wood.

With a bewildered amazement lord Montfort beheld the flight of his captive: he cursed his infatuation, and vowed revenge: he called to his followers, and urged, with shouts and imprecations, a fierce pursuit. The chase soon became general, but with little prospect of success, so much were their horses jaded with the previous racing; but the fleetest of them would not have had, even when unbreathed, the remotest chance of rivalling lord Mortimer's steed.

The prince and his friends disappeared in the woods which skirted Tillington Hill, and when the governor of Hereford Castle, with his guards, approached, Roger
Mortimer

Mortimer issued forth at the head of five hundred brave soldiers — the pursuers drew back—the gallant warrior advanced.

“ Aha ! my lord Montfort ! ” cried Mortimer, “ how long wilt thou hold Hereford Castle of Llewellyn ? Beshrew me, but I will be again its governor before the year is out ! ”

Lord Montfort stopped not to dispute with word or sword the fiery Mortimer’s claim to the governorship of this great border castle, but rode off as keenly as though he were still pressing his steed to win the prince’s gold, although with far more anxiety of heart.

Mortimer continued the chase to the foot of the castle, and then returned and escorted the prince, who was closely attended by Alwyn and Eustace, to Wigmore Castle.

CHAPTER IX.
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WHEN the prince and his attendants arrived at Wigmore Castle, he was welcomed by so great an assemblage of illustrious barons and knights, as sufficiently assured him of the prudence of his flight from the power of Leicester, and that there was just ground for hope of his being yet able to emancipate his king and country from the tyranny of his uncle-in-law. When he had expressed his sense of the services he had received from Mortimer and Gloucester, in planning his escape, he addressed the more immediate agents—his friend Thomas de Clare; Roger de Lacy, who had managed his own escape in the general confusion; the lord Crofts, who had given the signal from Tillington Hill; and Eustace Fitz-Richard, whose timely confirmation

confirmation of every thing being prepared for his flight, had made him take his final determination : these, with several others, received the most flattering assurances of their prince's future favour, expressed in a manner that inspired affection for the person, and reverence for the dignified character of their future king. To Alwyn the prince turned, and looked on him with the eye of strong affection.—“ Your being the partner of my flight, my generous Alwyn,” said the prince, “ greatly enhances my joy. I grieve to see how much your long and cruel confinement—a captivity so unjust, and so contrary to every generous principle, that it, with numberless other instances of Simon Montfort's tyranny, should fire every English breast with the sacred duty of setting his country free from so intolerable a yoke—I grieve, I say, my friend, to behold how much you have suffered in health. Take some refreshment, and then retire to rest ; you must recruit your strength, for I can  
neither

neither spare your sword nor your counsel."

When Alwyn retired from the great hall, where joy and festivity welcomed the liberated prince, he requested the company of Eustace. He had on their way to the castle expressed his gratitude for the timely hint Eustace had given him to accompany the prince to Widmarsh, without which he would not have sought an opportunity of requesting the permission, being too exhausted on his arrival at Hereford to seek an interview with the prince, until he had been refreshed by some hours repose; but Eustace's intimation had aroused the energies which sickness and long confinement had enfeebled, and enabled him not only to request leave to accompany his prince, but to bear the fatigue of sitting several hours on horseback, while the races were run, as well as the subsequent flight to Wigmore.

Eustace's breast glowed with satisfaction

tion at the acknowledgment of his having been the means of giving liberty to Alwyn; there was no reservation arising from jealous fears—he had acted rightly by his friend, and even should his having done so be the means of that friend's ultimately obtaining the hand of her he himself adored, Eustace felt that he could never regret his having been true to friendship and knightly honour.

When Alwyn and Eustace were in the chamber appropriated to the former, Alwyn made eager inquiries after the welfare of Adeline, of whom he had not received the slightest intelligence since the battle of Lewes, so close had been his confinement.

Eustace, having first assured him of her present abode with the princess Eleanor, in Kenilworth Castle, entered into a full account of the events which had fallen within his own knowledge, up to the period of his departure from England.

Alwyn expressed what he thought of  
the

the generous services of Eustace; but there was evidently some painful ideas conjured in his breast, and he turned his fine eyes on Eustace with an expression which seemed to say—"Have you beheld Adeline, and so served her, without being inspired with love?"

Eustace felt the silent question, and his eyes sought the ground. They for some minutes sunk into silence.

At length Alwyn, as though desirous of changing the current of painful thoughts, inquired of Eustace's adventures in Spain, his own acquaintance with the country and prominent characters, both Christian and Saracenic, giving a strong interest to the subject. This was a topic on which the two knights could confer with pleasure, and without reservation; but Eustace mentioning having stopped a few days in the capital of Old Castile, excited a flush of colour in the attenuated visage of Alwyn, and raising himself on his couch, he said, with rapidity—"It is improbable;

probable; but yet you may have visited the convent of our blessed Lady, and there heard—and yet it is most unlikely!—did you there hear, my friend, of Leonora de Guzman?”

“The lady’s name was familiar to me,” said Eustace, “from the circumstance of your negociation of the ransom with the unfortunate Ben-Abraham; and supposing that I might have the good fortune of again seeing you, I sought intelligence of the welfare of one you had so eminently served.”

“What heard you of donna Leonora?” said Alwyn, anxiously.

“I inquired for the donna, and hearing that an English knight was at the grate,” said Eustace, “she honoured me with her presence, habited in the sable garb of a sister of saint Benedict.”

“A nun!—has Leonora taken the veil?” said Alwyn, with strong emotion.

“Yes, she honoured me with a sight of her pale, melancholy, but still beautiful countenance,”

countenance," Eustace replied; "and made many anxious inquiries after the brave knight to whom she owed her liberation from a Moorish harem: she then acquainted me, that deeply mortified by the conduct of her family, and strongly impressed with the notion that all her earthly hopes were for ever blighted, she had meekly resigned herself to her destiny, and taken the veil."

"Poor Leonora!" said Alwyn, and sighed deeply.—"But say, my friend, did she mention the cause of her blighted hopes?"

"No; she said that she complained of no one but her family; and that whatever hopes she might at one time have indulged, had been annihilated by the disgrace she considered they had incurred concerning the ransom. She desired me to say, should I ever meet with you, that her prayers for your happiness were daily offered up to Heaven, and that her last thoughts, given to aught earthly, would be



be a grateful remembrance of her deliverer."

Alwyn continued some time in silent meditation, and Eustace shortly afterwards retired to his own couch.

On the following day, Alwyn again spoke with Eustace concerning Adeline, and they freely discussed the peril of her present situation, as rendering her an almost certain victim to Leicester's views in wedding her to sir Adam Gordon. It was in vain for them to condemn a system which, by placing orphan minors at the disposal of the sovereign, and through him of some powerful guardian, by whom they might be forced into any marriage which best suited his views: the oppression in this individual instance was what they had to contend with—not the general custom, which was a point of too great power to be willingly parted with by the sovereign. If Eustace thought himself disinterested, and at all events was determined to act as though he were, Alwyn was also  
of

of too nobly generous a character to reject his cooperation, from any jealous doubts of his being a rival. They therefore consulted as two friends who wished to render an important service to a third person, without allowing any other feelings to actuate them than a sincere desire to place that person in a state of free agency and personal security. They were fully sensible that the falling off of lord Leicester's late allies, and the escape of the prince, which had at once given a mighty head to a counter-revolution, would render it still more necessary for him to secure the fidelity of those who still remained true to him by the fulfilment of his engagements to them; and since he had purchased sir Adam Gordon and his lances, by the promise of the hand of the English heiress, and had already put the Scottish knight in possession of her lands, as a pledge of his sincerity, and a means of maintaining his followers in a foreign country, it might be presumed that the gallant northern  
would

would be anxious to obtain, by a prompt marriage, the unquestioned lordship of the lady's lands, lest the overthrow of his patron's power should for ever deprive him of them—a species of prudence exercised by all men who act from mercenary motives, without much regard to their employers' feelings, who might naturally think that this desire of payment beforehand proceeded from one of two motives—either a doubt of his honour, or an anticipation of his destruction; neither of them very flattering testimonies of a follower's faith in his lord, and likely enough to germinate a due estimation of a mercenary's real worth.

There was another source of apprehension still more alarming than even that which arose from sir Adam Gordon—the personal designs which Leicester had entertained, and which had, more than the dread of lady Gertrude's malignant jealousy, determined Adeline to flee from her former place of confinement. When Leicester

cester had caused Adeline to be seized at Canterbury, he had had her immediately carried to Kenilworth Castle, the then residence of his wife, the princess Eleanor. By this procedure he effectually silenced the voice of censure, since no one could question his right to place his ward under so suitable a guardianship; while it at the same time prevented any one objecting that he entertained designs inimical to her honour: but however powerful a prudent conduct may be in suppressing public accusation, it cannot annihilate the doubts and fears which have been justly excited.

The character of Simon Montfort had been amazingly unfolded within the last twelve months; he had proved himself a remorseless and grasping tyrant; and that mask of religious zeal which he had assumed, and by which he had gained the inferior clergy to his party, who looked upon him, or affected to look upon him, as worthy of being added to the army of saints, was so evidently a deceitful veil  
under

under which he disguised the real turpitude of his heart, that those whose suspicions of him had been justly excited, might well think him capable of adding to his crimes that of sacrificing to his passions a young and lovely female. Adeline's residence therefore in the Castle of Kenilworth might only be temporary, and with a view to lull suspicion, while Montfort might remove her at any moment he chose to a place better suited to the perpetration of his own designs, should he not fulfil his engagements with sir Adam, but determine on gratifying himself.

Alwyn and Eustace having reciprocally communicated their apprehensions for Adeline's safety, consulted what steps should be taken to ascertain her present disposition to remain under the immediate guardianship of the earl, since their interference must be regulated by her wishes. Whatever might be Alwyn's inclination, he could not, even if his state of health would have permitted, quit the prince, unless

unless by shewing a strong necessity he could obtain his permission ; but Eustace was untrammelled by any such ties, and was therefore master of his own actions. Some days repose might restore Alwyn to sufficient strength to enable him to resume his arms and undertake active service ; but the delay of a few days might be fatal to Adeline, and he therefore concurred in Eustace's proposition of immediately setting out, and endeavouring to obtain an interview with Adeline.

This was not agreed to without a struggle in Alwyn's breast ; he felt that he was giving the advantage to Eustace of being ever associated in Adeline's mind as her generous and devoted protector ; while he, on whom she had such superior claims, was prevented, by a chain of untoward circumstances, from doing any thing worthy of his love. This was a situation sufficiently galling, and might, in a less exalted mind, have engendered suspicion and dislike ; but in a character so truly noble as was  
that

that of Alwyn, such unworthy sentiments could not have place; and he consented to Eustace's departure with the utmost confidence in the purity of his intentions, and with most perfect reliance on the faith of Adeline.

The escape of prince Edward had been the signal for the lords marchers flying to arms, and by a simultaneous rising they made themselves masters of the whole country from Hereford to Chester. The earl of Gloucester took the field, and the several members of the new alliance joined in breaking down the bridges on the Severn, by which they succeeded in cooping Leicester and his troops in Hereford. Thus within a few days, and without a battle having been fought, did the mighty usurper find his power vanish, and himself, cut off from all resources, on the very brink of utter ruin.

But as all the military measures which were now carrying on were of a preliminary nature, and however important as such,

were not those in which an individual knight, and one so unconnected with the leaders as was Eustace, could either indulge in his love of glory, or evince his devotion to his chief, he felt himself at liberty to devote himself for awhile to the service of Adeline; he therefore, having resumed his knightly arms, and accompanied by Fitz-Harding, who had reached Wigmore Castle the day after Eustace, and insisted on retaining the character of his squire, and attended by Langley, set out for Worcester, and from thence journeyed on to Kenilworth.

Kenilworth Castle, one of the largest and strongest fortresses in the interior of the kingdom, was the chief residence of the earl of Leicester; and here his wife, the princess Eleanor, now lived in a style of magnificence far surpassing that which her unfortunate brother and king had ever enjoyed. The proud and ambitious Eleanor was not yet aware of the real danger of her lord's situation, nor could she have easily



easily been made sensible that his greatness rested on a foundation so weak as to be threatened with an overthrow by the first assault. It was only by unwilling degrees that she believed the intelligence she heard. When first told of prince Edward's flight, she, like her husband at Hereford, believed he had fled beyond the seas; next she heard that, instead of doing so, he had been actually joined by his uncle William de Valence, by John earl of Warenne, and Hugh Bigod, who, with one hundred and sixty valiant men at arms, had landed in the county of Pembroke, of which William de Valence was the earl. Still the princess ridiculed the idea of these men daring to measure their strength with Simon Montfort, and was equally incredulous when she heard that the whole western marches were in complete possession of the prince's party. Eleanor therefore continued to indulge in fancied security, and maintained her state in Kenilworth, with that mixture of courtly magnificence and

warlike grandeur which became her high rank, and the wife of him whose name was still greatest in the kingdom.

The war which had broken out, had caused the prohibition to travel with arms to be tacitly broken; and when Eustace arrived at Kenilworth Castle, he was admitted as a knight, supposed to be of Leicester's, or, as it was styled, the king's party. He entered unquestioned, and having made known his wish to have the honour of an interview with the lady Adeline de Melmonby, was conducted to an apartment in one of the towers of the main body of the castle, and there requested to wait until his wishes should be announced.

In less than half-an-hour a lady entered, in whose form and mien he at once recognised Adeline, although she wore a wimple of thick silk similar to that which had obtained her the name in Tunbridge Castle of the "veiled lady." Eustace was immediately known; and Adeline, throwing back her veil, welcomed him on his return

return to England with the cordial warmth of sincere regard. Eustace received these marks of friendship with a mixture of gratification and of pain, which arose from the conviction that had her heart been more deeply affected, she would have been less embarrassed in her felicitations. Adeline inquired the success of his pursuit of his sister, and heard, with heartfelt joy, the full atonement Emeric had made to the now happy Margaret.

After a pause, Eustace changed the subject.—“It is my fortune to be the bearer of tidings which will doubtless be pleasing to you. Your gallant kinsman, lady Adeline, whose captivity his friends have so long mourned, is at length restored to freedom; sir Alwyn de Tauheld escaped with prince Edward from Hereford.”

The countenance of Adeline indicated the emotion she felt, but her joy was expressed in words inarticulately low; and then, as if to change a topic too powerful

for her feelings, she again spoke of Margaret.

Eustace's own heart assured him of what was passing in her bosom ; but he was not shaken in his purpose, and when an opportunity offered of touching upon her present situation, he gently intimated that Alwyn, suffering under the baleful influence of a long and close confinement, had not at present the power of waiting on her, and that it had therefore been agreed between them, that he should inquire of her if any service was required from her friends.

“ I should be unjust to the princess Eleanor,” said Adeline, “ did I not acknowledge her courtesy and protection ; but there are points on which it is impossible for me to speak to her, and which have been a source of great wretchedness to me. Happily, the present absence of lord Leicester has procured me a temporary relief ; but I tremble for the future. I have in this castle had the same proposition

sition made to me which drove me from the lady Gertrude's roof, and I begin to fear, that to escape one evil fate I must plunge into another—that I must indeed become the wife of sir Adam Gordon.”

“Think not of it!” said Eustace, warmly; “the tyrant's power is almost at an end; be firm, and trust in your friends.”

“Alas! fain would I hope,” said Adeline; “but he who has so often triumphed, may again crush his enemies.”

“Hope on,” said Eustace; “the sun of Montfort's glory has gone down; all England is flying to arms, and soon will even this proud castle surrender to the royal Edward.”

At this moment a door opened, and a young man, whom Eustace immediately recognised as Guy Montfort, the youngest of Leicester's sons, entered the chamber. His countenance was flushed with rage, as stalking up to Eustace he said, with a mixture of contemptuous insolence and fierce wrath—“Who is it that unlicensed

enters our castle? Who is it that plays the soothsayer, and prognosticates the fortunes of our house? Who are you, fellow? Who gave you a right to golden spurs?"

"Lord Guy Montfort knows who I am," said Eustace, calmly, "and may perhaps have heard that the earl of Gloucester has exercised on me the same high privilege lord Leicester did on him."

"He is a traitor!" exclaimed lord Guy, "and has no right to confer knighthood."

"Do you speak, my lord, of your father?" said Eustace.

"Insolent! no, of Gilbert de Clare," cried young Montfort.

"It is an unsettled point," said Eustace, "but will not long continue so; I would, only that it is unnecessary to repeat to one who has listened to my past discourse, tell you my reasons why I think there is about to take place such a change in the government of this realm of England, as will prove that those who fight under the  
king's

king's standard, and not those who seek to deliver their sovereign, are the traitors."

"Audacious rebel! Would that all the enemies of my royal uncle would thus surrender themselves! As to you," added Guy Montfort, eyeing Eustace with disdain, "it is an unmerited honour, the confining you in a vault of Kenilworth Castle, but such shall be your present abode, until I learn my lord Leicester's pleasure."

"Hold, my lord!" said Adeline; "recollect that this gallant knight came to Kenilworth to wait on me—it would be discourteous, and wholly unbecoming the hospitality of your princely mother, were any obstruction offered to his departure."

"Is it for him, the son of a London merchant, that the lady Adeline has thrown aside that envious screen?" said lord Guy. "Ha, now I recollect, you sojourned in his father's house—that leader of the city rebels; but soon shall he and all his base accomplices feel that Leicester governs Eng-  
N 5 land."

land." He approached Adeline, and would have taken her hand—"Fair lady," he added, in a softened strain, "give a kind ear to my prayer, and this minion shall live. Nay, lady, look not thus disdainfully on me; a son of Simon Montfort may utter his love in any shape to the proudest and the highest dame in England; but you cannot expect that I should solicit the hand of the destined wife of a poor Scottish knight; no, lady, I would but exercise a baron's privilege over his vassal's bride. You comprehend me?"

"Insolent boy!" exclaimed Eustace, seizing him by the arm, and throwing him from Adeline. "Is this lord Leicester's guardianship of his ward? Is this the manner in which the sons of Montfort are to insult the noble maidens of England? May foul shame disgrace our name and blood, if we longer submit to this audacious tyranny!"

The countenance of young Montfort, as he recovered himself from the shock he



he had received, and now scowled on Eustace, betrayed the malignant character of the future assassin of his cousin, Henry D'Almaine.—“ You have dared to rudely touch a descendant of the kings of France and England,” he cried ; “ you said the sun of my father’s glory had gone down : look forth from that casement—gaze for a moment on the orb of day—it is for the last time !” He left the chamber.

Adeline sunk on a seat. Eustace knelt and took her passive hand.—“ Think not,” said he, “ that for myself I mind his threats ; but should I be deprived of the power of aiding you, recollect that sir Alwyn is with the prince ; send to him, and the royal Edward will provide the means of removing you from this most unfitting residence.”

“ Alas ! my kind honoured friend,” said Adeline, “ I can think but of your danger ; too surely will Guy Montfort fulfil his threat—my blood freezes when I think of what I have heard him say he would

do to rid himself of his enemies. Perhaps there is yet time for your escape. Fly ! I beseech you, fly !”

“ No, I came openly, and with intentions becoming a knight,” said Eustace, “ and I will not flee as though conscious of having committed wrong.”

“ Oh, it were madness to remain in the very centre of their strength ; the valour of a single arm would nothing avail. I entreat of you, for my peace sake, fly ! I should be for ever wretched, were aught fatal to befall you.”

“ This anxiety is indeed balm to my soul,” said Eustace, without rising ; “ to be an object of your care, consoles me for all my past wretchedness, and will teach me to die contented.”

“ Rise, rise !” said Adeline, passionately ; “ recollect that more are threatened than yourself. Fly to London, and warn your father of the dark hints of this true son of Simon Montfort.”

“ Your advice comes too late to be followed,

lowed, fair lady," said Guy Montfort, entering the chamber at the head of a numerous guard.—"Seize on that traitor! I arrest him in the king's name. Bear him to the vault I ordered!"

Eustace sprung up and grasped his sword; but the soldiers rushed forward at the same moment and seized him: he struggled with them, but their numbers baffled his efforts, and he was hurried from the apartment.

Guy Montfort affected no concealment of his having imprisoned Eustace, vindicating the act by charging him with being a rebel, and a spy of the earl of Gloucester's, and that he only delayed his execution as such until he should receive lord Leicester's orders. With this intention he caused Fitz-Harding and Langley to be expelled from the castle.

CHAPTER X.  
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IN his gloomy prison Eustace had ample time for meditation and the indulgence of torturing apprehensions, mixed with vain repinings at being thus deprived of the power of serving those he loved. Indignant as he felt at the tyranny which had doomed him to a prison, he was not insensible of his own rashness, in placing himself in the power of a family who had acted in a similar manner by every person they considered hostile, on whom they could lay their hands. Such acts had been, since the battle of Lewes, of every day's occurrence; and Eustace's committing himself within the gates of Kenilworth Castle, only proved his rash devotion to Adeline, or that his absence from England had diminished his knowledge of the uncertain tenures

tenures by which individual liberty was held ; for had he more justly weighed the risk, he might have endeavoured to serve, and have done so more effectually, by a more guarded approach, than that which had attracted the jealous suspicion of Guy Montfort.

He frequently endeavoured to gain tidings of what was passing abroad, or of Adeline, from the soldiers who brought him food, and otherwise attended him at stated periods ; but these men seemed under a strict discipline, and answered not his questions, or if they replied, it was in a brief and unsatisfactory manner ; independent of which, they were so frequently changed, that he had not time to conciliate their regard, or ascertain their vulnerability to a bribe.

Several weeks had passed over without the slightest alteration in Eustace's situation, when one day a soldier, whom he had not before seen, entered his prison, whose appearance particularly struck him. His face

face was that of a youth of almost feminine beauty, and in person he was slightly and elegantly formed, although much disfigured by his garb of a spearsman, with his basin-like helmet and loose tunic of iron scales.

On entering the small stone chamber in which Eustace sat in melancholy listlessness, the youth seemed to eye him with a look of kindness, which inspired the hope that he at length beheld one who might be prevailed on to serve him.—“What has induced you, good youth,” he said, “to put on that heavy harness? methinks your native fields would be pleasanter than a castle guard.”

“Yes, sir, and so would the humble roof of thatch,” replied the youth; “but when it was fired, I thought it best to join the standard of the spoiler.”

“A base choice,” said Eustace, “and belies the fair index which promises nobler thoughts.”

“Do

“Do you read revenge in it?” said the youth, calmly.

Eustace half started. — “What mean you?”

“You know me not,” said the youth—
“yet well I recollect you. Your prosperity has been my daily prayer these eighteen months last past: yes, sir; you promised to restore to me, with a worthy character, a sometime worthless fellow—Will Leap-the-dyke.”

“Good Heavens! do I behold the fair Margot?” exclaimed Eustace.

“Hush, sir!—But I must be brief.—Hardicknute—you recollect the villain—is a captain of young lord Simon Montfort’s. He came to offer me his hand, and because I spurned the caitiff, he nobly burnt our house to the ground; I escaped, and vowed revenge on him and those who tyrannized over our unhappy country; my single arm might plant a dagger—but what would that avail? I have joined lord Simon’s army, and,” she stepped close up to Eustace,

Eustace, and whispered in his ear, "prince Edward knows our every movement—the hour of vengeance is at hand!" Margot paused and then added—"On our march hither with the London levies, we plundered Winchester; and not content with sacking even its churches and monasterys, lord Simon has brought a fair captive to this castle—the same you rescued from Hardicknute."

"The lady Agnes de Clare?" exclaimed Eustace.

"The same," replied Margot, and added—"Encamped in the neighbouring fields, I was addressed by a seeming mendicant; it was my faithful Langley, who has tried a hundred devices to approach you: I obtained permission to enter on the castle duty. Are you ready to flee?"

Eustace expressed his thanks and willingness, but added that he must first learn the situation of a lady in whom he felt deeply interested. Margot having declared her wish to serve him to the utmost

most of her power, he gave her such instructions as appeared necessary, and she withdrew.

It was night when Margot reentered Eustace's prison chamber. She told him that the lady Adeline had departed from the castle two days before, under the escort of a Scottish knight, but whither she had been carried, Margot had not had the power of learning. Eustace was deeply afflicted by this intelligence; he dreaded that sir Adam had at length obtained his prey.

"But, sir," said Margot, "there is a lady who is anxious to see you; I saw her at sunset on the north bastion, and presumed to mention your situation, thinking she would wish to hear of her former deliverer. She seemed overjoyed one moment, and overwhelmed with affliction the next. Am I at liberty to admit her?"

"Impossible! You cannot mean——" exclaimed Eustace, without finishing the sentence.

"That

“That Agnes de Clare would visit you in prison,” said a voice; and at the same moment, a figure completely enveloped in a large cloak entered the stone chamber.

Eustace sunk on one knee—“How can I express my sense of this unmerited honour?” he said, and raised her extended hand to his lips.

Agnes threw back the cloak, and discovered her beautiful countenance, but which had lost its roses, and something of its roundness, and instead of their wonted spirit, her eyes beamed with tenderness, and were softened by languor.—“I would speak to you, sir Eustace,” she said, “as I was in other days wont to do, but I have not the spirit.”

“Your present captivity, lady, has hurt you,” said Eustace; “but be not alarmed; no man, however infatuated, will dare to injure the sister of the illustrious Gloucester.”

“Would to Heaven I had been the sister of a simple knight!” said Agnes, passionately :

passionately : “ but there will soon be an end of my repining ; I have struggled with my pride of birth—I have struggled with the feelings of my heart, until this fragile body is shattered to the very brink of destruction ; and for what ?—Sir Eustace,” she added, and spoke with rapidity, “ you are again on the point of setting out to serve Adeline de Melmonby—she does not love you.”

“ I know it, lady, nor am I influenced in my wish to serve, by any hope of favour at her hands,” said Eustace.

“ Then why continue devoted to one you can never hope to win ?” said Agnes ; and then added, in a lower strain—“ Alas ! why do I ask that question ? Sir Eustace, you were my squire ; are you not bound to me in knightly service ?”

“ You and the lady Adeline alike command me,” said Eustace.

“ I must not have a divided faith : but I am mocking my own feelings,” said Agnes.—“ Be still what you have been to me,

me, and continue true to the same nobleness of purpose which I know how to admire. Yes, sir Eustace, I understand myself; I have the discretion which becomes the daughter of England's greatest baron : I have no idle feelings—no, sir, I can command myself, and can honour my knight, as becomes Gloucester's daughter. Wear this chain, sir Eustace, and always recollect, when you cry your war cry—Agnes de Clare.”

The lady took a chain of gold links from her neck, and put it over the head, and it hung on the breast of Eustace. Agnes smiled faintly, and said, pointing to a bracelet on her arm—“ You perceive I wear the trophy of your prowess against the king of the Romans ; I shall pray for your future success, and rejoice in your augmenting fame.”

Eustace pressed her trembling hand to his lips, and Agnes would have retired, but he said, detaining her hand—“ Men in desperate situations will do desperate things ;

things; your brother's desertion of Montfort may prompt him or his audacious sons to avenge themselves by some outrage on you; it is a possible evil, and might be shunned by a timely flight: would you honour your knight by permitting him to lead you hence?"

Agnes started—"I had not thought of this—they would not dare! and yet what is it that they have not dared? they have forced their queen to be an alien, and made their king a captive; but should I flee, companion of a single knight? It were a desperate measure!"

"I advise not, nor would I needlessly alarm," said Eustace; "but if you determine to depart, my life is at your command."

Agnes remained some moments silent; her countenance betrayed the indecision which agitated her breast: at length bending on him a look which penetrated his soul, she said, with some degree of firmness—"I have the utmost reliance on
your

your faith, and will determine before I dismiss my conductor: should I not again see you, may Heaven be your guard—farewell!" Agnes drew her cloak around her and withdrew.

Several hours passed over, and the agitated Eustace was sinking into a slumber, when he was aroused by distant shoutings, which penetrated through the stillness of night his vaulted prison. He listened with intense interest, and thought they were the cries of battle which were borne on the midnight blast; but still they were so remote, that he concluded, great as was the extent of the castle, that they proceeded from beyond the fortress. Every moment the tumult increased, and it became evident the garrison were alarmed, and flying to arms; the trumpets pierced the air, and the drums rolled from ward to ward.

The door of Eustace's prison opened, and Margot carrying a lantern beneath her large military cloak, entered, followed by

by Agnes, similarly shrouded. — “ The blow is struck !” said Margot, her eyes flashing with proud exultation ; “ prince Edward has surprised young Simon’s camp, and the sleepers are awakened to destruction, or seek safety within the castle : hasten, sir knight—on with your hauberk and helmet ; we shall obtain egress in the general confusion.”

"Am I," said Eustace, addressing Agnes, "to witness your peril in a scene so full of danger?"

“ I thought not you would have shrunk from the charge,” she said, in those quick tones which in gayer moments bordered on petulance; then, as if correcting the sally, she added, in another voice—“ I thank you for the kind consideration which dictated the question, and will leave you to judge.—Margot, tell sir Eustace the cause and nature of the tumult which now rages without.”

“As I before informed you,” said Margot, “prince Edward has had correct intelligence

telligence of the careless manner in which young Simon's army lay encamped in the neighbouring fields; he has in consequence made a night march from Worcester, and has surprised them; but as he has not brought up any machines wherewith to attack the castle, he will retire from before it as abruptly as he approached. Therefore, those who wish to escape must seize the present moment. I shall flee—for my share in this night's work, were it known, would entitle me to a halter."

"Then, dearest lady," said Eustace to Agnes, "it is for you to determine whether you will trust in the honour of the Montforts, or allow me to be your escort to your noble brother, who is doubtless with the victorious prince."

"He is," said Margot.

There was a charm in an epithet Eustace had used, as well as in his tone of voice, which had more influence on the heart of Agnes than her fear of the Montforts, or desire to be under the protection
of

of her brother. She gave him her hand, and said she put her honour and her life under his protection.

Eustace hurried on his shirt of mail and helmet, and supporting Agnes, followed Margot from the tower. The tumult which now reigned throughout the castle facilitated their passage; the hurrying groups, or solitary individual flying with a torch in hand, asked no questions of the knight in armour, the helmeted Margot, or hooded Agnes, whose sex could not be distinguished, so completely was her figure shrouded by the cloak she wore. They glided hastily along, and reached the postern by which the fugitives were tumultuously entering, whose appearance clearly told the completeness of the surprise with which their camp had been assaulted. None had had time to dress, but had madly fled with such covering as they could in their fright lay their hands on; a rug or blanket was a prized screen from the night air and mock-

ing scorn of the soldiers at the gates who let them in.

Agnes's hood completely shrouded her; she could neither see nor be seen: her hand was grasped by Eustace—in him she trusted. To pass the postern was the chief danger, but they were favoured by the hubbub; the guard kept no guard, being solely occupied in ridiculing the strange figures which entered from the bridge. Margot led, and Eustace with Agnes followed through the flying throng. They slowly made their way; they had passed along the bridge—they reached the barbican: this last outer defence was more carefully guarded; it was the barrier which must first be assaulted by the enemy, and it was necessary to note that the foe were not admitted, instead of the runaways from young Simon's camp. But still their vigilance was directed outwards, and Margot, with the captives, had passed the barrier before they were challenged.

“Who goes out?” was shouted when they

they were a dozen paces from the barbican.

Eustace placed Agnes immediately before him, so that she was completely screened, and hurried on.

The challenge was repeated, and a quarrel from a crossbow drove right through Eustace's hauberk, and remained fixed in his shoulder. He gently urged Agnes to fly more quickly : quarrels and arrows flew around them—Agnes screamed.

“ They cannot reach you,” said Eustace.

They stepped on more quickly ; arrows hit him, but rebounded : they were beyond the range of the crossbows, and also that in which an arrow could pierce a coat of mail. Margot had fled beyond all danger.

The route they had pursued was in a different direction from that in which those who fled from Simon's camp approached the castle. This was prudent, although by rendering them a distinct object, it had subjected them to the parting salutation of the barrier guard. However, when

they were a hundred paces from the barrier, the darkness of the night favoured them, and they pursued the remainder of their way to where Fitz-Harding and Langley were stationed in safety, being thither guided by Margot, who had stopped when once without bowshot of the guard.

With a shout of joy Fitz-Harding welcomed Eustace; and having been briefly made acquainted with his wish to escort the lady whose hand he still held to earl Gloucester's banner, they placed her on a mule; but in doing so, the shaft of the bolt in the shoulder of Eustace was accidentally struck, and caused an involuntary exclamation of acute pain. The truth was now disclosed, and Agnes, who had had no suspicion of his being wounded, uttered a cry of alarm.

Eustace assured her it was a mere trifle—a hurt not to be mentioned; and that on his placing her under the protection of her brother, he would have the wound tended.

tended. This made her as impatient to proceed as she had been anxious, the moment before, to aid him with her own hands.

They now set out—Eustace, Agnes, and Fitz-Harding mounted, and Langley, with his beloved and intrepid Margot, keeping up with them on foot.

Morning began to break in the east, and they beheld the banners of the victors and vanquished flying in the same camp, and the conquerors gathering together their numerous captives (for scarcely any had been slain), and their rich booty in horses, armour, and equipage.

The earl of Gloucester was with the prince, and to him they were guided. The prince and the red earl were on horseback, close to the standard of Simon Montfort; Alwyn and Thomas de Clare, with several others, were on foot. Edward was speaking, when, seated on her mule, with her hood thrown back, and her veil streaming in the wind, Agnes de Clare approach-

ed. There was alarm in her countenance, yet the morning air had restored the roses to her cheeks; and with a returning smile, and something of her wonted manner, she accosted the prince, and threw a glance of brilliant light around.—“A gallant knight has done more for me than you, sir prince, my good brethren, and a royal army—sir Eustace Fitz-Richard; this is my deliverer, my lord, from yonder proud castle.”

“By whatever hand delivered, fair lady,” said the prince, “I rejoice to behold you, and hold in high honour the gallant knight for this additional service: and truly, lady, although I had known of your captivity, which neither I nor Gloucester did——”

“Not I, by saint Augustine!” cried the earl.

“I should not,” continued the prince, “have had the power at present of succouring you, any more than my uncle Richard, who must be content to languish yet a little longer in that fastness.”

“Knowing your inability,” said Agnes,

“I have

“ I have fled: but words are idle—where is your most skilful leech? my knight is wounded.”

Every one crowded round, and Eustace having alighted, was conducted into Simon Montfort's tent. The bolt was extracted and the wound dressed, and, although painful, was pronounced not dangerous.

CHAPTER XI.
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DURING the time Eustace was confined in Kenilworth Castle, Leicester had made many ineffectual attempts to extricate himself from his perilous situation in Hereford. All passage over the Severn had been cut off by the lords marchers, and a fleet from Bristol, in which he intended to have embarked his army, had been destroyed. Thus cut off on the English side, he had thrown himself into the country of his ally Llewellyn; but here his army was daily wasted, not by the sword of the enemy, but the mode of living peculiar to the country. Flesh and milk, without bread, was food which disagreed so much with his men, that he found himself under the necessity of making his way back into the marches, if he wished



wished to preserve the remnant of his army. But all the avenues were so closely watched by the prince and lords marchers, that the once-powerful Montfort was obliged to lead his men as though they were a body of outlaws, through trackless forests and wild mountain roads, until he at length succeeded in regaining Hereford. In all these perils he made the unfortunate king partake; wherever Montfort was, there also was Henry Plantagenet.

Various movements had since taken place; Montfort ever endeavouring to evade the prince, who watched him, and turned him at every point. Montfort's last hope rested on his son Simon bringing his army of relief; and hearing that he had arrived at Kenilworth, and also that the prince had retired from Worcester, he set out with his army to join his son.

In the mean while his partisan, sir Adam Gordon, firmly convinced of the desperate circumstances of his leader, and anxious to become the legal lord of those

fair baronies he already held as the affianced husband of Adeline, was continually pressing his suit with Montfort for the marriage being completed. Leicester wavered, and the expedition into Wales had for a time served him; but since his return he could no longer parry the urgent Scot's request, who at length wrung from him his consent to proceed to Kenilworth, and bring his bride from thence, Leicester insisting that the marriage should take place in his presence. For this condition he assigned not any other reason than that, as the marriage might be one of force, it would be rendered more inviolable by being solemnized before the king.

Attended by twenty lances, sir Adam had reached Kenilworth, and presenting the earl's missive, his bride was surrendered to him by the unwilling Guy. Adeline had suffered daily persecution from young Montfort's addresses, at one time professed to be honourable, and at others, when exasperated by her repulses,

he

he hesitated not to declare with the utmost insolence, that she should be his, without having the honour of being his wife. Her anxiety for the fate of Eustace, whom she believed to be languishing in a prison vault for his desire to serve her, was heightened into absolute wretchedness from her inability to interest any one in his behalf. The princess coldly referred her to her son Guy, such matters belonging to his charge, and he threatening to make Eustace's life the forfeit of Adeline's disdain.

Such was Adeline's situation, when sir Adam demanded to be her escort to Hereford. To resist the authority with which he was invested would have been altogether vain—to be of use to Eustace she had not the power—to be relieved from the persecution of Guy Montfort was a positive good. She even dared to hope that misfortune might have chastened Leicester's mind, and that he would hearken to her prayers to be freed from her engagements

gements to sir Adam, without his renewing the proposition by which she had been formerly insulted.

Sir Adam was not a lover, but he admired the beauty and dignified manners of his affianced bride, and he had every disposition to do honour to the lady who was to raise him to territorial greatness: but he had no idea of sacrificing his interest to her feelings; he saw her repugnance without emotion, and persevered in paying her courteous attentions with a gravity the most imperturbable.

They journeyed leisurely, and as sir Adam confined himself to mere civilities, Adeline was relieved, and had leisure to think of him she loved, as she reclined in her litter, without giving more than a passing glance, and shudder, on the stalwart knight who rode at her side.

The midnight marches of the hostile armies had taken place during the absence, and without the knowledge of sir Adam. It was therefore with surprise that, on their

second

second day's journey, he found he had fallen in with Leicester's army, who had taken up their quarters at a small town, with the purpose of pursuing their march on the morrow to Kenilworth, which change seemed to have rendered sir Adam's impatience premature—at least, so said Leicester, when the knight presented Adeline to him at the convent where he lodged.

It was night, and in the privacy of a cell to which Adeline had been conducted on her arrival, she was kneeling, in silent prayer, when she was startled by a voice close to her, saying—"Thus do the virtuous gather strength in the hour of peril!"

She looked up, and beheld by the light of the solitary lamp the earl of Leicester; his countenance was pale and haggard, and his eyes heavy, yet restless. Adeline arose, and the earl took her hand.—"I know that you hate, perhaps despise me," he said mournfully; "but can you not forgive a fault of which you are the innocent cause?"

cause? Say that you forgive me, and consent to remain near me, and I will dismiss this mercenary suitor: greatly as I require the aid of valiant men, I would, to pleasure you, dismiss one half my army."

"Sir, you degrade yourself, and dishonour me, by resuming a subject which should never have been mentioned," said Adeline. "Think, my lord, on your perilous situation, and seek to make your peace with God and man."

"Fair monitress, I will in future listen to you," said Leicester, "so you will be ever at my side; and when I have crushed the saucy Edward and his rebels, will raise you to a state to which princesses shall give place."

"Think not to tempt me so easily as you deceive yourself," said Adeline. "A fugitive, lately dependent on the bounty of Llewellyn, should not vaunt over prince Edward and the noblest barons of England."

A frown passed over Leicester's visage,  
but

but he the next moment smiled.—“A sorry bounty, lady, that lost me one half my army: but I will not dispute your licence to taunt me now, so that you will promise to hail my future triumphs as your own.”

“This, my lord, is unseemly mockery,” said Adeline.

“I would have it realized,” said Leicester, with warmth; “and to assure you of my sincerity, king Henry shall this very hour create you countess of Richmond.”

“At king Henry’s feet I will implore protection from all who would take an unmanly advantage of my orphan state,” said Adeline, looking firmly at the earl.

“Protection from king Henry!” said Montfort, with a contemptuous smile; “I thought you had known better to whom the power of giving it belongs.”

“I know who lately had the power,” said Adeline; “but I trust the times are changed.”

“Then, lady, you shall know they are  
unaltered,”

unaltered," said Leicester: "consent to my wishes, and have all the honours of Richmond, or, by the great God of Heaven, you shall at morning prime become the wife of that petty Scottish knight!"

"To your wishes I shall not consent, nor barter my fair name for the most splendid coronet in England," said Adeline, her whole form and countenance, in mien and expression, breathing the spirit which animated her bosom.

"Then prepare to be the bride of sir Adam Gordon!" said Leicester, frowning, and retiring from the chamber.

Adeline was left to painful thoughts; she had no means of escape, or power to resist the solemnization of a ceremony where every one was under the authority of Leicester. As to the king, who now reposed under the same roof, he was the mere tool of Montfort's pleasure, carried about from place to place to do his bidding, and sanctioning by his presence the acts of the tyrant, and branding the prince  
and



and loyal barons with the stigma of rebellion. From the king she had therefore nothing to hope, nor could she venture to indulge in any from her destined husband, who, as he sought her hand from interest and ambition, must be altogether insensible to any of those feelings of pity which might operate on a breast that loved, and yet sought the gratification of its wishes through the medium of authority.

While Adeline still meditated, and tortured herself with a thousand apprehensions, and entertained plan after plan by which she might escape the bonds by which she was trammelled, and was obliged to give up every one in succession as impossible of execution, the Franciscan friar entered the cell. Adeline started on beholding this man of guile, and heard with disgust, yet without surprise, his artful exhortations that she would think better of the proposal made to her by lord Leicester, and consent to become his consolation amidst the harassing cares of state.

Adeline

Adeline replied not, so great was her horror of the friar's turpitude; but when he expatiated on the happiness she would enjoy as the sharer of Montfort's hours of ease, she was provoked into saying—  
“Such happiness, I presume, as that which the lady Gertrude enjoys!”

“That was a bad, malignant woman,” said the friar, a crimson flush centering in his pale forehead.

“Was?” said Adeline, looking full at the friar.

“Ay, lady;” and the friar's eyes were turned on the floor. “She ate the confections she had drugged for me.”

Adeline shuddered.

The Franciscan finding, after many efforts and much sophistry, that there was no likelihood of his altering Adeline's purpose, gave up the attempt, and bade her prepare to meet her husband at the altar at sunrise.

Adeline retired not to rest, and when the first grey light of morning penetrated through

through the narrow window of her cell, she rose from her knees, if not with confidence, yet with the resolution inspired by innocence and a becoming fortitude. A woman entered the cell, and tendered her services in assisting her to dress; and shortly afterwards master Nicholas also presented himself.—“ I am overwhelmed with despair, nobly lady,” said the earl’s barber, “ lest I should not have time to arrange your beautiful hair before the ceremony commences; and indeed I have so many important avocations, that I declare, upon my honour, I am at a loss what first to give my attention to. Would you choose to have your hair in long screw curls, or twisted and hanging in two equal divisions in front over each shoulder? or will you, my lady, choose to have all the back hair brought to a point, like my beard—begging your ladyship’s pardon—and hanging down the centre of your back? or will you——”

“ Prithee, friend, give thyself no trouble  
about

about my hair," said Adeline; "but go and attend to those other important matters of which you spoke."

"Truly, my lady, that must not be; I have my lord's commands to let every thing give place to attending on you: but perhaps," he added, fixing his keen dark eyes full on Adeline, "your ladyship has changed your mind. Shall I tell my lord that you have thought better, and will not wed this paltry Scottish knight?"

"I shall not make thee my messenger," said Adeline, turning away.

Nicholas bowed low and retired, and in a few minutes Leicester entered; his face was flushed, and his eyes sparkled with joy.—"Congratulate me, fair Adeline," he said; "my son Simon's standard is in sight—once more my star has the ascendant—in two days I shall annihilate Edward's army—take me now, in my hour of triumph, and you shall every day have to wait on you a hundred such knights as him

him whom your scorn would force me to make your husband."

"I accept of no choice at your hands," said Adeline, firmly; "I will consent to neither proposition."

Sir Adam Gordon entered.—"My lord," he said, "I am come to lead this lady to the altar."

"Lady Adeline, decide," said Leicester, and took her hand.

"I have decided," said Adeline, throwing his hand away.

"Now, by the rood," said Leicester, "thou meritest thy grovelling fate!—Lead on your bride, sir Adam."

Sir Adam had looked for a moment doubtfully; but when thus instructed, he seized in his gigantic grasp the small hand of his victim, and without noticing her ineffectual struggles, hurried her into the contiguous church.

The grey light of morning shone faintly through the east window, giving a greyish hue to the persons who were assembling.

bling. On the altar burnt some waxen tapers, but no priest was there, excepting the Franciscan friar. Adeline trembled. Was her hope of pity at the altar cut off! She threw a hurried glance around, and beheld the king enter; but no reverence was shewn him, nor did he carry majesty in his mien, as with downcast eyes he advanced, and then, as if overcome with weariness, sunk on the stone steps, and with his arms crossed on his knees, looked heavily round, and again sunk into seeming torpidity. Adeline stood between Leicester and sir Adam, besides whom there were some half dozen knights and others present.

The friar commenced the marriage-service, and it was regularly gone through, up to the point when the bride must by word express her acceptance of her spouse—Adeline was mute.

The friar repeated the interrogation—Adeline replied not.

“My daughter,” said the friar, “this  
silence

silence availeth not—I hold your consent given, and shall proceed.”

“On your peril, reverend father!” said Adeline firmly. “I protest, in the name of God, and before the image of my Saviour suffering on the cross, and in the name of his blessed mother, who there looks down on me with protecting grace, against the further profanation of this holy rite!”

“Thy objuration is in vain,” said the friar, and repeated the question.

Adeline started forward, and threw herself at the feet of the king. She clasped his knees—her veil had fallen back, and she looked up in his troubled yet benign countenance with an expression of soul-touching entreaty, and with a face so lovely, yet so pale from terror, that the monarch was roused, and with his wonted impatience of manner when aught touched his feelings, exclaimed—“What mean you, my child? are you not the willing bride of that Scots knight?”

“Never—never! oh, save me, my liege, save me!” cried Adeline, the tears standing in her eyes.

“Brother Simon,” said the king, rising, though his knees were still clasped by Adeline, “what means this? this good child is one of the most favoured of my dear absent Eleanor’s maidens—she shall not wed but according to her liking.”

“Pshaw, my lord, you have nothing to do in this!” said Montfort, hastily; then stooping down, he whispered in Adeline’s ear—“No one can stop this ceremony but I—consent to my wishes, and I will dismiss your knight.”

“Never!” said Adeline.

“My lord Montfort,” said the king, “I will not be a party in this business, excepting to forbid the marriage.—Sir priest, retire from the altar.”

“I command you to stay,” said Montfort, imperiously; and added, looking at the king—“You are weary, my lord—I pray you sit down.”

Adeline



Adeline more firmly clasped the king's knees, exclaiming—"Protect me! protect me! God's vicar here!"

The king was agitated by feelings which prompted that which he knew he had not the power to perform.

Montfort again whispered in Adeline's ear—"Be not rash—no one on earth can save you but I."

"God can!" said Adeline, withdrawing her arms from the king, and looking, still kneeling, up at the image of our Saviour.

"Neither God, nor devil, but I!" exclaimed Leicester.

At this moment the clattering of feet hastily descending a stone stair was heard, and the next moment master Nicholas rushed from the steeple door, and threw himself at Montfort's feet. He gasped for breath, his eyes were starting from their sockets, and his dark visage was blanched with terror.

"What ails thee, Nicholas?" said Leicester starting—"saw you aught from the

steeple but my son and his gallant army?"

"The Gloucester! the Mortimer! the prince!" cried Nicholas.

"Thou liest! art mad? damned wretch!" exclaimed Leicester, pale and shaking.

"On my life 'tis true!" said Nicholas, crouching on his knees, and looking piteously in his master's face—"they come on every side—you are surrounded!"

"It is flat insanity," said Leicester, collecting himself, looking round on the affrighted knights, and at the same time grasping the king's arm; "did I not with mine own eyes behold the banner of my son Simon, of De Vere, of Montchesney, of a score of brave barons marching to our aid?"

"Ay, my noble lord, you saw them all," said Nicholas, almost prostrate on the pavement, and crawling to the earl's feet, "but they were carried by prince Edward's soldiers, and over them is now hoisted the standard of the prince on the hill towards Kenilworth, too certainly pointing

pointing out the place from whence the prince has won them."

"Cease, dotard — cease your hideous croaking!" cried Leicester, and spurned his too-faithful slave.

"There is all the gold I have," said the king, throwing three or four pieces to Nicholas; "had I the full of this basin, thou shouldst have it for thy news."

These words restored Montfort to himself; he looked sternly on the king, and collectedly on all around. — "Break off this ceremony," said he; "we have another and a nobler game to play. — This way, so it pleases you, my lord king. — I request your attendance, my lords and gentlemen."

All retired, excepting sir Adam and Adeline, who on her knees was returning thanks to Heaven for her deliverance.

"I must not thus be balked," said sir Adam, mentally; "should we lose the day, farewell to all my brilliant prospects!"

and then aloud—"Proceed—proceed with the ceremony, sir priest."

But the friar closed his book, and quitted the altar by a side door.

"Then thus I take my bride!" said sir Adam; and lifting Adeline in his arms, with the ease with which a mother does her infant, he carried her, unheeding her cries, from the church, and striding to where his lances were stationed, he placed her behind one in whom he especially confided, and formed around her the remnant of his Scottish host. Sir Adam gave his orders to his men, and Adeline was carried off in the midst of twenty lances.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Conclusion.*

THE day had arrived on which the fate of the ambitious Montfort was to be decided.

Having himself beheld at break of day the banners of his son and others of his party, he was at first incredulous to the information brought him by Nicholas, whom he had desired to watch their approach from the steeple of the church; but when he himself had ascended a neighbouring eminence, and beheld the prince's standard, with his well-ordered battle stationed on the hill which commanded the road to Kenilworth, and in two other directions the forces of Gloucester and Mortimer, he too late per-

ceived that all was lost, and in the bitterness of the conviction, said aloud—"The Lord have mercy on our souls, for I see the prince will have our bodies."

But although this was wrung from him in the agony of the moment, and in the keen feeling of disappointment on finding that the banners of his son and the barons, whom he had expected to have this day joined, had been taken from them by the prince, Montfort shook off the despondent feeling, and prepared to meet the enemy as became a leader of his high renown.

As the prince and Gloucester were marching to attack him on opposite sides, and Mortimer hovered between them, ready to assist either, or to become an assailant himself in a third quarter, Leicester found himself obliged to draw up his inferior numbers in a circle, as presenting an equal front against every attack. But this was an order of battle which, however compact, embarrassed the motions of his  
men,

men, and if once broken, must render their destruction inevitable.

At the distance of half a mile from the field of battle, in a sequestered hollow, a ruined tower and wall, with some broken Saxon arches, overrun with ivy, choked with brambles, and partly overshadowed by a sepulchral yew, had been appointed by sir Adam as the place where Adeline should remain until the battle were decided. In this retired spot Adeline was stationed with the score of lances sir Adam had reserved from that day's fight, to be his own and his fair bride's escort, should all else be lost.

Immediately from this hollow a neck of land gradually arose, and circling westward, formed the background to the slope on which the earl of Gloucester's battle was drawn up. On this eminence, and in the rear of the martial array, although in advance, to the left of Adeline, while on her right, also in advance, lay the town of Evesham, a lady on horseback, at-

tended by a small train, one of whom carried a lance, with the three chevrons of the house of Clare on its gonfanon, was in conversation with a knight in complete armour, but with the vizor of his helmet open. Their distance might be half a mile, but while Adeline and her guard were partially concealed by some straggling underwood, the sun shining through a clear atmosphere full on the exposed group on the crown of the ascent, displayed them so clearly to her view, that she felt convinced she beheld Agnes de Clare and Eustace Fitz-Richard. It was strange—improbable—but Eustace might have escaped from Kenilworth, and from some accident of war, Agnes might have sought a shelter in her brother's camp.

Adeline gazed on them with an intense anxiety, with a bitter pang that she could not fly over the intervening space, and find protection with them from the persecution of sir Adam. The knight bowed  
his



his head to the lady, drooped the point of his lance, then wheeling round, the generous steed he rode sprang forward, and bore his gallant rider to the battle field. Adeline recollected the rose-coloured cointise embroidered by Agnes, which the fair daughter of Clare had given Eustace when he was knighted—that which now flowed behind the knight who was speeding to the front of Gloucester's battle, was of the same beautiful colour. Adeline doubted not that it was Eustace Fitz-Richard.

Adeline knew the feelings of her friend Agnes's heart, but she also knew the pride of her lofty house, and trembled for her happiness.

A low ridge running in front of Adeline's station, shut out the greater part of the battle field, and although she could at first see Gloucester's array, it was partially lost to her view as it moved onwards: but she beheld, on a hill to the northward, the martial host of Edward,

their resplendent arms glancing back the sun's rays, while silken banners of various colours, and glittering with gold and silver, waved proudly over lances with their fluttering gonfanons, and all the panoply of war. The trumpets sounded from banner to banner—that host moved down the hill—the shrill blasts of the trumpets became incessant—human voices joined in the heart-stirring acclaim—the war-cries were reechoed from hill to hill—the battle had commenced.

In that host which was now also concealed, and whose shouts were blended with the general clangour, Adeline's heart whispered was Alywn, foremost of the brave: her heart sickened—she looked to the eminence from whence Agnes was gazing on the mortal strife, and with clasped hands thought—"Oh, Agnes, Agnes! what may not this day be to you and I?"

The lances who were her guard were loudly expressing their dissatisfaction at being

being not only excluded from sharing in the glorious strife, but at being prevented, by the rigid orders of their commander, from ascending any of the heights which could command a view of the battle, when suddenly a numerous body of men poured over the ridge and hurried along to the right of their station.

“Curse on those Welsh, they flee!” cried one of the lances.

The mountaineers rushed along, and were passing within half-bow shot. The Scotch borderers shouted to them in terms of contumely and reproach. An archer, mounted on a hackney, rode from the throng, and approached the group of lances.—“You who skulk in security,” said the archer, fiercely, “should be more sparing of your remarks.”

“We are here unwillingly,” said the leader of the lances, “and constrained to be so by our commander’s orders.”

“And we quit the field by ours,” replied the archer; “never did Ap-Rhyse  
turn

turn his back on the foe from fear. But I will tell thee, brave Scot, what has made us leave yonder fatal field: we have no lives to spare in the Saxons' quarrels—so hath said the sage prophet in Llewellyn's ear; we must hasten to defend our native hills. The fierce Edward hath sworn, that neither Cambrian nor Scot shall in future mix in their civil brawls; he hath vowed the destruction of our countries." Ap-Rhyse turned away, and the Welsh allies of Montfort disappeared in the neighbouring woods, leaving the Scots murmuring to each other their opinions of the fearful prognostics.

The defection of the Welsh at the onset gave fatal assurance of how the day would end to Montfort's arms; but his energies were fully aroused, and he did all that a general and a brave man could do, to animate his troops and strike terror into the foe. But, with a more exceptionable policy, he had forced the king, clad in plain armour, so as to be undistinguished

tinguished by the enemy from any other knight, to take his place in the battle. His reason for thus making the king fight against those for whose success he prayed, might be, to give confidence to his men, and an assurance to the barons and knights who fought on the same side with their sovereign, that even in the event of defeat, neither their honours nor lands would be forfeited, since he could not be a rebel who fought by the king's side, under the royal standard. Yet it was not the less cold blooded, on the part of Montfort, thus to expose the life of the sovereign who had, during a long series of years, showered on him more favours, riches, and honours, than he had done on all his kinsmen of the half blood collectively, although his favour to these Poitevins had been made the chief ground of the barons' wars during so many years of his distracted reign.

When the compact body of Leicester's army was broken by the desertion of the  
Welsh,

Welsh, it was easily penetrated by the simultaneous assaults of the prince and Gloucester, and soon by that of Mortimer, with his hardy veterans. The fight was now buckler to buckler, man to man; the lance, the sword, the mace, and battleaxe, superseded the distant bow; all was one scene of horror, yet composed of individual combats, brief, but terrible. A knight, in plain armour, was wounded; a battleaxe was raised to strike him to the earth.—“I am Henry of Winchester, your king!” cried the knight.

“Sire!” said his assailant, and dropped his battleaxe.

A warrior rushed on his foaming steed to the spot.—“My father!—Thanks, gracious Heaven!—Let me, sir, conduct you from this sanguinary scene.”

“My son! my gallant Edward!” exclaimed the overjoyed monarch.

The prince conducted the king to a place of safety. The battle raged with tenfold fury. Leicester beheld his son

Henry

Henry slain; lord Peter Montfort shared the same fate, as did Hugh le Despenser, and other powerful barons. His own situation was desperate; hemmed in on every side, his horse killed under him, and now fighting on foot, he glared wildly around, and called for quarter: but his prayer was not granted; the breasts of his assailants were filled with vindictive wrath against the oppressive tyrant, and he was cut and hacked at until his armour ceased to defend him, and, with his sword still in his hand, Simon Montfort was slain.

Eustace had not been withheld, by the wound he had received at Kenilworth, from being in the thickest of this day's fight, serving under the banner of Gloucester, while Alwyn fought under that of the prince. Towards the close of the battle, Eustace held his dagger at the throat of a young nobleman, clad in splendid armour, whom he had struck to the earth, and in whose terrified countenance he recognised Guy Montfort, who had contrived

contrived to join his father the day previous to the attack on his brother's forces at Kenilworth.—“ Mercy ! mercy ! ” cried the youth.

“ You deserve it not,” said Eustace.

“ I am your prisoner, rescue or no rescue ! ” said Guy. “ Who is my captor, sir knight ? ”

“ He who was so long your prisoner, imperious boy ! Eustace Fitz-Richard.— Here, soldiers, secure lord Guy Montfort.”

His orders were obeyed by some spearmen, who were mixed in the fight, and lord Guy, with burning rage rankling in his breast, was on the point of being led away, when a voice behind Eustace shouted—“ Thus I rescue thee, and punish the audacious Fitz-Richard ! ”

The words were accompanied by a blow from an iron mace, which struck fiercely on Eustace's helmet, and made him stagger, and his knees almost bend to the ground. The blow was on the point of being repeated, when a knight threw himself



self between them, and received the stroke on his shield.—“Fitz-John,” cried the deliverer of Eustace, “that was a coward’s blow; but it is other of thy practices I must now avenge. Recollect you not your treacherous assault at the field of Lewes? Take this—and this, from Alwyn de Tauheld!” The knight struck at Fitz-John as he spoke, and a desperate combat ensued.

Eustace had recovered the shock of the blow he had received, and panted to have avenged himself for former acts on the baron Fitz-John; but he would not interfere where he saw that Alwyn must triumph. The baron fell, and cried aloud for mercy.

“I grant it,” said Alwyn; “but you must hereafter implore it of your king.”

Through all that storm of battle no one had more distinguished himself than sir Adam Gordon, whose gigantic strength few could resist; but when he saw that the day was irretrievably lost, and his  
great

great leader slain, he drew off the few lances who still remained of his once numerous band, and rode swiftly towards the ruin where his bride was stationed.—“Let me but wed the fair Adeline,” he thought, “and the broad baronies of Melmonby and Holteby, Sadbergh and Askrig, Newton, Leyburn, and Carthorpe, will fill my ranks with hardy vassals, instead of grasping mercenaries, and give me a high station amongst the proud nobles of this haughty land.”

Previous to the onset of the battle, Eustace had instructed Langley and Margot, the latter of whom still retained her military habiliments, to endeavour, to the utmost of their power, to penetrate into the town of Evesham, and discover if Adeline were there, which he was induced to think must be the case, from having seen sir Adam Gordon’s pennon in the field, and having found where she was placed, bring him immediate intelligence. Margot, who had been already employ-  
ed

ed as a spy by the prince, and, together with Ralf de Arderne, had given him the intelligence which enabled him to surprise and capture the army of young Simon Montfort, was well fitted for her present service—and not less so was her lover, Langley. The signal to Eustace in the battle field of Adeline being discovered, was to be a white flag on a lance, on the ridge of the hill where the lady Agnes was stationed, to be planted by the one, while the other was to remain in Evesham to give him the necessary information.

When the battle was ended, Eustace descried the white flag, and rushing through the crowd of pursuers and pursued, of victors and captives, reached the skirts of the town, and there, elevated on the roof of a building, that he might be more conspicuous, he saw Langley, who, pointing to the distant ruin, said that he had thither traced the lady Adeline. Eustace hastily mounted the horse Langley had secured behind the building he  
was

was on, and though nearly exhausted with fatigue and loss of blood, galloped headlong on.

Margot's signal had been descried by Agnes de Clare, and she had ridden, with her train, thitherward, and inquired its meaning. Margot briefly acquainted her, and pointed to the ruin. Agnes saw the group, and descried her friend, and also perceived the advance of the Scots knight and his remaining lances. Agnes looked at her own guard; they were not half the number of the men at arms who surrounded Adeline. With them to attempt her rescue, commanded as they were by the renowned Gordon, would have been madness. Agnes ordered Margot to fly to the pursuing army, and, in her name, command the immediate aid of all whom she should overtake. Margot threw off her tunic of steel scales, and shot along the field with the fleetness of the wind.

Agnes beheld a knight riding swiftly on from Evesham; she looked towards  
the

the ruin, and saw the train of sir Adam turning from it. Again she looked at the approaching knight, and recognised the wearer of her golden chain and embroidered cointise. He had cried out—she saw the lances stop, and sir Adam advance two steeds' length from them. Each knight had his lance in rest. They met—Agnes shrieked—Eustace was overthrown.

The pennons of the Clares came swiftly on from the battle field; but there was one knight who outstripped those who bore them. He gained the ruin, as sir Adam was again moving on.

“Turn, turn, sir Adam!” cried the knight; “you shall not thus carry off the fairest maiden in England.”

Sir Adam did turn, and in wrath, for he saw, that should he even overthrow this new assailant, every moment's delay would give time for the approaching numbers to cut off his final retreat. But he had no alternative, and steadfast as a rock he received the charge of his antagonist,  
whose

whose steed, exhausted by his speed, fell beneath the shock of their well-struck lances. But the English knight, as though he had anticipated the disaster, sprung on his feet as his horse was falling, and having, in the same moment, unslung his battleaxe, rushed in, and seized the reins of sir Adam's horse, and struck at the knight across the body, which was at the moment unguarded by his shield. Sir Adam reeled in his saddle, but was immediately supported by his faithful followers.

The knight paused not a moment after he had given that tremendous blow, but sprung on the lance behind whom Adeline sat. With one stroke of his battleaxe he severed his right arm, and seizing the horse's reins, endeavoured to lead him away ; but he was now himself assailed on all sides by sir Adam's lances. Adeline sunk from the horse at his feet, and the brave knight stood over her, and fought with the desperation of a Lybian lioness.

Fierce

Fierce cries came on, and—"A Glo'ster! a Glo'ster!" warned sir Adam's lances to draw off. They did so, forcing their unwilling leader from the field.

"It is I, my Adeline!—your own Alwyn!" said the knight who had rescued her, as he now knelt, and raised her head.

She opened her eyes, and looked on the unhelmeted head of the knight; a thrill of rapture rushed through her bosom, but the next moment her eyes wandered, and she faintly said—"Where is he?—I beheld him fall!"

She rose, and saw at a little distance the prostrate knight; a female was kneeling beside him. Adeline rushed forward, and sunk, opposite to Agnes, at the side of Eustace.

The lance of sir Adam had struck right through his hauberk, and entered deep into his breast. He yet lived, and gazed on the lovely faces which were bent in tears over him. He smiled faintly—some inarticulate words trembled on his lips—

his eyes gradually closed—the soul of Eustace had fled.

Our tale would here end, were it not necessary to touch on what was passing in London.

Dame Fitz-Richard was gazing on the recently-arrived Margaret, whom she every moment pressed to her bosom, and would admire the improvement in her person and air, which her sojourn in foreign courts had given, while Fitz-Richard, with a more regulated mien, listened to lord Emeric's extenuation of the wrong he had committed in robbing Margaret's parents of their blooming daughter, and Margaret herself would aspire words of tenderness, and look with glistening eyes on her father, on her mother, and on her husband, when suddenly the great bell of Saint Paul's tolled; she shuddered, and involuntarily exclaimed—"Gracious Heaven! is that the signal for another massacre?"

"No, my child," said Fitz-Richard, rising,



sing, "but for a folkmote, at Paul's-cross, which I must attend.—My lord," he added, addressing lord Emeric, "since you are now the son of a London citizen, you may probably wish to witness one of our civic meetings."

Lord Emeric assented, and he and Fitz-Richard set out for Saint Paul's.

Within the large walled area which encompassed the cathedral of Saint Paul's, an immense multitude was assembled. Thomas Fitz-Thomas, the usurping mayor, stood in the stone desk, from whence sermons and homilies were preached to the people. He was attended by the sheriffs, sergeants, and other city officers.

Fitz-Richard and lord Emeric, accompanied by about forty of the most opulent and respectable citizens, distinguished for their uncompromising loyalty to the crown, made their way through the crowd, and obtained standing space near the cross.

Lord Emeric looked with an inquiring

eye around, and whispered in Fitz-Richard's ear—"I have seen many assemblages of men, but I never saw so many with their right hands within their cloaks, and their eyes bent with such fell expression, as now surround us, one moment watching him in the scarlet gown, and then scowling on you and your company."

"Mind them not—they are Fitz-Thomas's creatures," said Fitz-Richard, carelessly; "he in the scarlet gown, he has summoned us together, and will anon propound the object of the meeting."

Emeric continued to scrutinize the assemblage, and particularly to note Fitz-Thomas. That personage seemed much agitated; he several times stood forward, and with one hand extended, appeared on the point of addressing the people, but would stop, and his grey eyes would flash keenly on Fitz-Richard and his company, and then he would turn his head aside, and whisper in the ear of a man who stood in a bending posture at his elbow. This man  
had

had something peculiarly sinister in his countenance whenever he for a moment raised his head ; his face was of a cadaverously sickly hue, rendered more horrid by a ragged beard of light red hair ; but it was in his eyes, and a ghastly smile with which he seemed ever to assent to what Fitz-Thomas said, that the most truculent expression struck on the beholder's view. Emeric thought he had never beheld a countenance more indicative of sycophantic villany than that man's ; and when his eyes wandered from him, and he noted the beings by whom they were more immediately surrounded, men who were of the very dregs of the people, and saw each whispering his fellow, and with folded arms seemingly grasping the handle of a weapon, concealed beneath their cloaks, he became troubled, and again hinted his suspicions to Fitz-Richard.

Fitz-Richard and his companions also observed these evil signs ; and the former, addressing the mayor, inquired why the

business of the meeting was not proceeded with.

“Be not in such haste, worthy friend,” said the mayor, with a malicious leer; “men who have done evil are not wont to hurry judgment.”

“How mean you, sir mayor?” said Fitz-Richard.

“Can you with an unblushing front ask that?” said the mayor, wrathfully. “Do you think your practices, and those of your friends who surround you, are unknown?—Do you think I and the barons don’t know who carried off the bridge keys?” At this the multitude murmured, and pressed more closely on the loyal band.—“Do you think,” continued the mayor, “that we do not know of all your designs against the liberties of England, and that you would especially betray this city into the hands of Henry Plantagenet—that you intend to have a royal justiciary sitting in judgment on your fellow-citizens, and consigning to chains and death the brave men  
who

who are now assembled to judge you?"

Shrieks and cries were now heard, and long knives and daggers glanced from beneath the cloaks of the surrounding ruffians; but Fitz-Thomas waved his hand, and they restrained their fury.

Fitz-Richard now saw the whole peril of his situation—that the meeting had been convened for the purpose of giving up to slaughter the chief royalists of the city. Fitz-Richard possessed that high-toned courage which can brave death, though unexcited by passion; he saw that to fly was in vain, hemmed in as he and his party were on every side by the assassins prepared by Fitz-Thomas. He placed his hand on the stone cross, and would have addressed the people, but he was interrupted, and his voice overpowered by the yells and hootings of the multitude. Fitz-Thomas spoke in the ear of the man with the yellow beard, who smiled with a ghastly grin; and sliding down from the desk, glided through the crowd, as a serpent does through the matted brake, his  
foul

foul tongue dropping poison in the ear of every one he passed. Emeric watched this man's motions, and said to Fitz-Richard—"That villain is telling the signal when they are to fall on and slay us."

"Thomas Fitz-Thomas," said Fitz-Richard earnestly to the mayor, who leaned forward and heard him amidst the horrid din, "this gentleman is lord Emeric, a friend of the earl of Leicester, and is in London by full permission of the baron; I pray you allow him to depart; I and my fellow-citizens will remain until the folk-mote be broken up."

"Make way for the noble Troubadour," said Fitz-Thomas, stilling the tumult with a wave of his hand. But Emeric refused to go; and addressing the mayor, said, at the same time laying his hand on his sword—"Sir mayor, I claim the privilege of a London citizen, being the son-in-law of master William Fitz-Richard; I remain here to witness your rightful proceedings, and to do battle, should any one attack the person of my father."

"Young

“Young lord, be advised, and depart,” said the mayor: “these are desperate times, and it would be a pity your singing should be cut short because your father is plotting treason.”

“By saint Denis,” exclaimed Emeric, “if a hair of my father’s head be touched, I will string my lute with thy recreant heartstrings!”

“By our Lady,” cried Fitz-Thomas, “we must even let thee dance with the rest.—My friends and fellow-citizens,” he added, addressing the people, who were in a moment silent, “I have convened you together for the purpose of exposing the atrocious crimes of which William Fitz-Richard, and those who support him, have been guilty, that you may have it in your power to express in the strongest manner your just indignation at their turpitude.”

The people shouted, and the hilts of their weapons were more firmly grasped. At this moment a noise was heard amongst the multitude, down the hill towards Ludgate, and voices were heard crying—

“News

“News from the army!—Make way for Geoffery Buckerel!—Hurra!—The earl of Leicester and the barons for ever!—Hurra!”

A man clad in armour, and mounted on a hard-riden horse, made his way through the crowd. He seemed as much jaded as his steed, and his countenance was heavily oppressed. To all questions from those he passed, he made no answer. At length he reached the stone cross, and the multitude shouted, and demanded that he should declare the tidings he had brought. He turned his horse in front of the cross, having Fitz-Richard, Emeric, and the band of loyal citizens on his right hand, and to the left, in and about the stone desk, the mayor and sheriffs, with their attendants. At this moment, when the multitude were hushed into silence, the bell in the great tower of the cathedral, which rose majestically above the mass of turbulent men, tolled the midday hour. All was stilled while those lengthened sounds pealed on the ear: the last died away



away, and the warrior spoke—"The earl of Leicester and the barons have been beaten at Evesham: the noble earl and his eldest son, lord Henry Montfort, are slain—all the other barons and their whole army are either slain, or captive to prince Edward, who with the king is in full march on this city, at the head of a victorious army, threatening its utter destruction."

These tidings struck dismay into the hearts of the multitude, and even Fitz-Thomas trembled. Fitz-Richard seized the moment, and pushing his way up into the desk, and thrusting Fitz-Thomas aside, waved his hand, and obtained an immediate hearing.—"My fellow-citizens, if you have done any thing to offend, your king will not forget how much in all times you and your ancestors have done for the service of the English monarchy. I will kneel to the royal Henry, and doubt not of the privileges of our city being preserved."

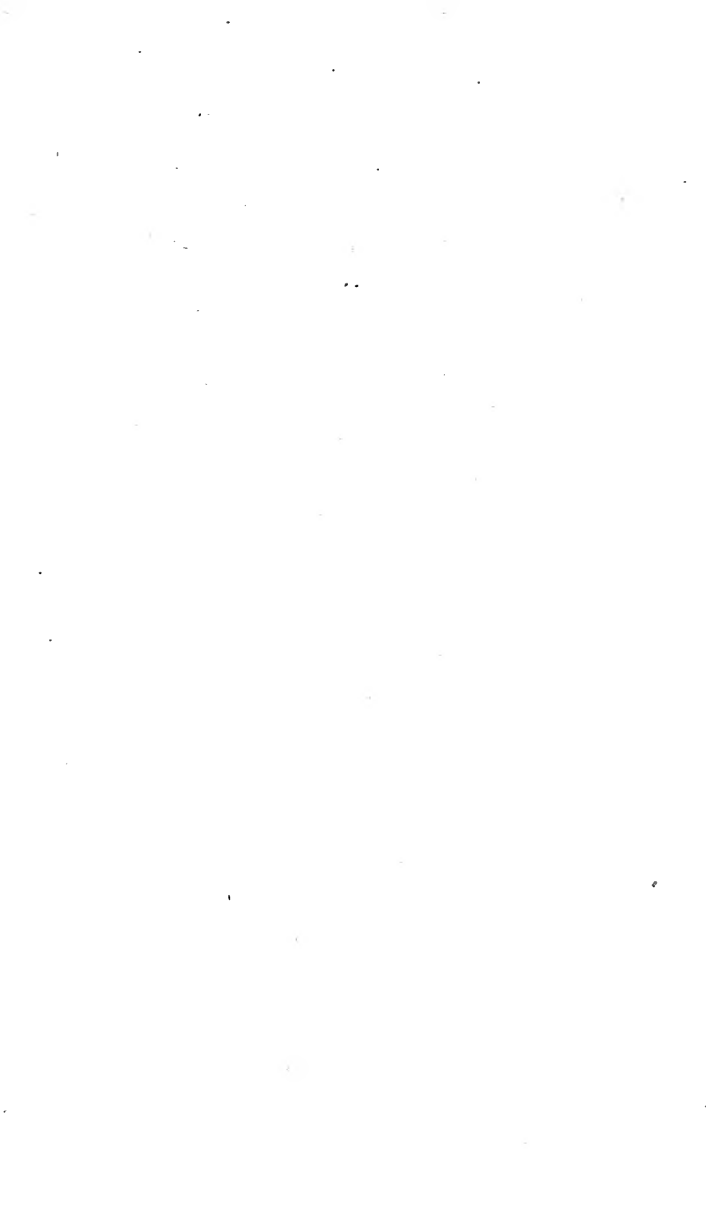
Thousands of voices vociferated—"Long live

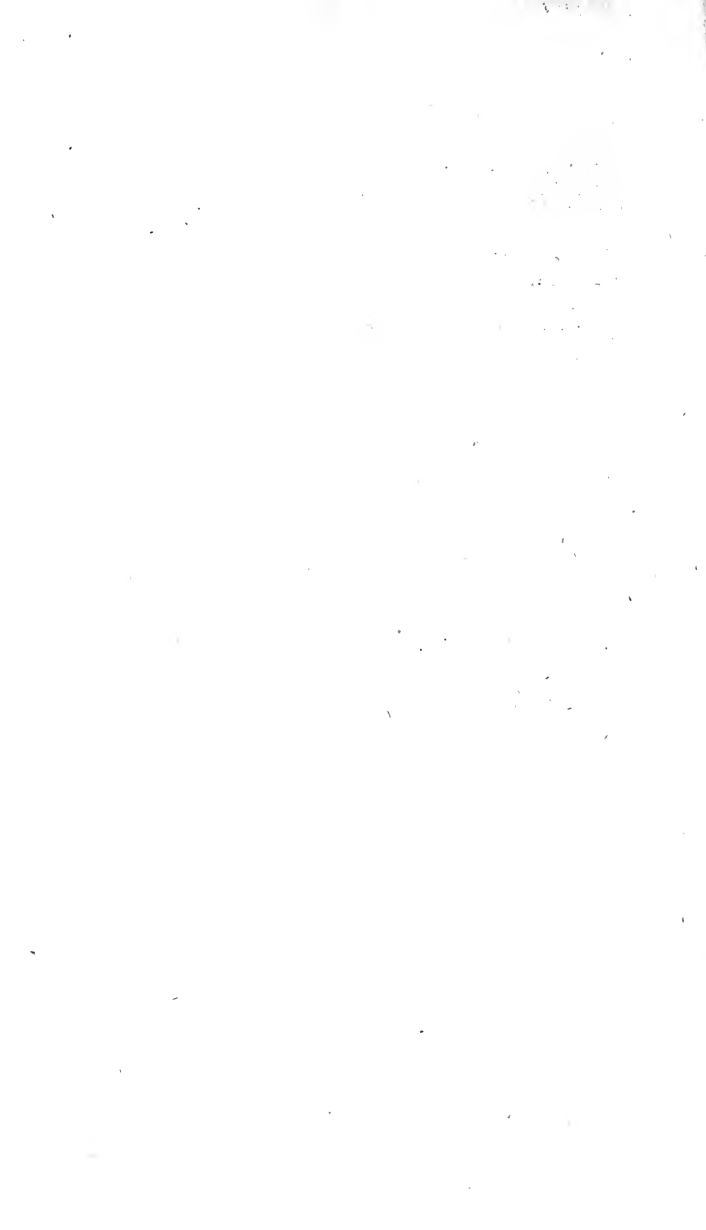
live king Henry!—Fitz-Richard for ever!  
—Down with Fitz-Thomas!—Fitz-Richard's our mayor!"

Thus in a moment the giddy multitude was turned. The intended assassins slunk from the scene, and some persons nearest the stone desk insisted on Fitz-Thomas resigning his gown, and Fitz-Richard assuming it on the instant. This was done; and in the same lawless manner that Fitz-Thomas had been invested with the chief civic office, was Fitz-Richard placed in his stead, but in which he was afterwards legally installed.

Fitz-Richard was carried in triumph to his own house; and the dame had that day for proud exultation—to be changed on the morrow to deepest affliction, by the tidings of her son being slain—the generous, ill-fated Eustace Fitz-Richard.

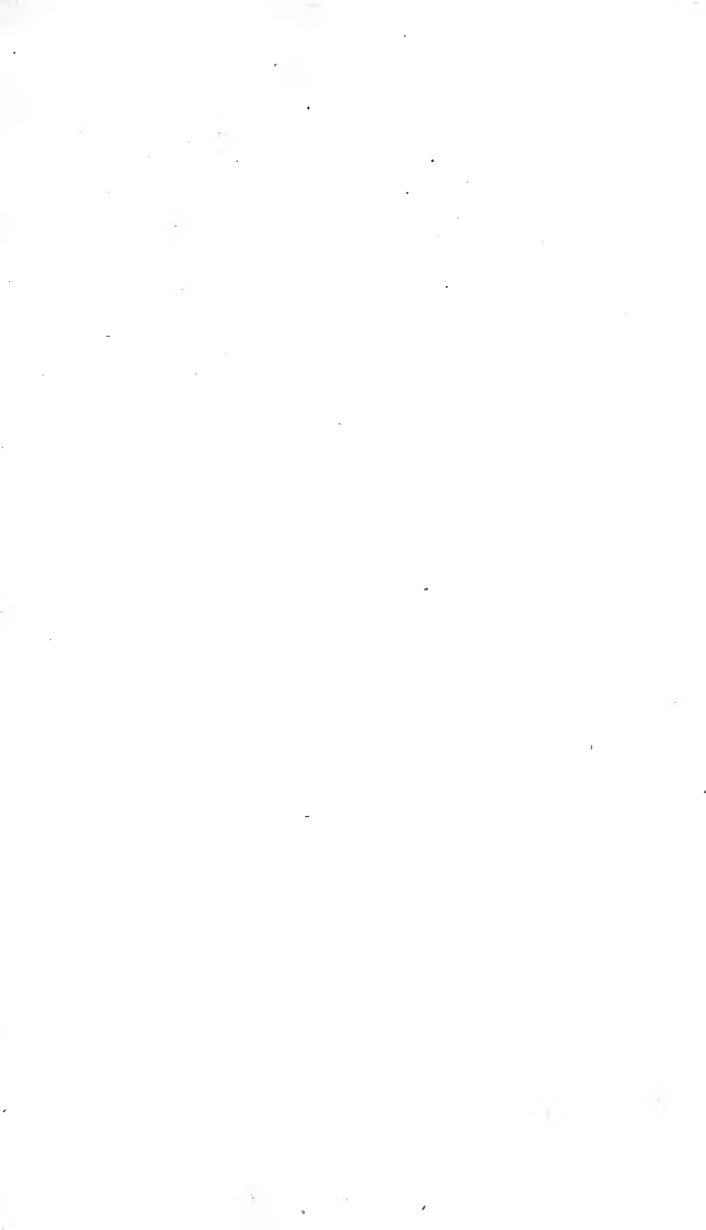
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